Systems, symbols and Identity: An exploration of the construction of national identities in Czech Schools through educational policies and practices from 1989-2014

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Author's Declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between established conceptions of Czech national identity and their reproduction in the national education system of the Czech Republic. It has been observed that the collapse of communism led to renegotiation of identities during the transformation period (Grossman, 2002), and in many cases, including in the Czech Republic, this manifested itself in a resurgence of nationalism (Cakl and Wollman, 2005). Education has often been assumed to play an important role in establishing and reproducing affiliation to a nation (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992) but the specific mechanisms involved in the Czech education system are unclear.

To explore how the education system of the Czech Republic navigated the process of political and economic transformation, and to investigate the impact that changes in education had on the image of the nation presented in schools, this study analyses a range of empirical data using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 1983). The data sources were: key policy documents; a series of textbooks for history and citizenship education; and interviews with teachers and students who had been involved in the Czech education system since 1989. It focuses on the latter years of compulsory education (grades 6-9, when pupils are aged between approximately 11 and 15 years of age).

The findings of the study show how assumptions made about Czech national identity subtly affected the formulation and delivery of education policy after 1989. They show how, despite the introduction of policies in 2004 to make education more inclusive, attitudinal barriers based on an exclusive, ethnic concept of the nation made effective implementation of these policies difficult, allowing structural inequalities that had become embedded in the system under communism, particularly regarding the education of Roma pupils, to remain in place. It also demonstrates how efforts to re-orientate the nation towards Western Europe create an image of the Czech nation that is based on ethnicity and shared history, and whilst affiliated towards Western Europe, remains exclusionary towards other ethnic groups. In the conclusions, some implications for the production of pedagogical materials, teacher training, and promoting inclusion in Czech schools are considered.

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A8	Accession 8 [countries that joined the European Union in 2004]
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
GR&T	Gypsy Roma and Traveller
MPSV	*Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí* [Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs]
MŠMT	*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy České republiky* [Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports]
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
RVP	*Rámcový vzdělávací program* [Framework Educational Programme]
ŠVP	*Školní vzdělávací program* [School Educational Programme]
TES	Traveller Education Service

Chapter 1 Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by setting out the background to the study in section 1.2, explaining the circumstances that motivated me to undertake it. The context and focus of the research are described in section 1.3. The research questions are then set out in section 1.4, which is followed by an outline of the overall structure of the thesis in section 1.5.

1.2 Researcher Construction and Personal Motivation

After I qualified as a secondary school English teacher in 2007, one of the things that I valued most about working in the Scottish education system was the teachers' freedom to teach whatever texts they chose as long as they suited the requirements of the course. Soon afterwards, I became aware of an idea mooted by the Scottish Parliament - in which the pro-independence Scottish National Party had recently formed a minority government - of once more making the study of Scottish texts a compulsory element of the Higher English course (Scottish Government, 2010). I began to question whether this was an attempt to protect and preserve Scottish culture in the face of globalisation, or an attempt to construct a sense of Scottish identity to promote political nationalism. I then started to wonder whether there was a clear distinction between these agenda, and to what extent school experience and curricular content had shaped my own sense of identity. Indeed, until I became a teacher, the experience of compulsory education had never seemed to warrant critical reflection due to its ubiquity across developed nations. It was only through engaging in reflexive processes in research and teaching that I began to consider the role of school experience in the construction of identities, and the extent to which this might be subject to deliberate policy decisions.

One of my areas of professional interest is the support of pupils with additional support needs. A significant number of the pupils who were classified as having additional support needs that I have worked with have been migrants from the Accession Eight countries[1] who spoke little English,

[1] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

and who schools struggled to support adequately. In order to pursue meaningful professional development that would enable me to better engage with this group, I returned to university to learn Polish and Czech, and research how migrants from Central and Eastern Europe were being educated in Scottish schools. Researching for my second degree Honours dissertation on the integration of European migrant pupils in Scottish schools, I found that although legislation existed to promote the rights of migrant children to access their home cultures in schools (through ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)[2], I could find little evidence of attempts to uphold these rights in practice (Anderson-McMullan, 2013). While researching for the above dissertation, I encountered a report by the Roma Education Fund highlighting the problems experienced by Roma pupils from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which found that many Roma families had taken the decision to move to Scotland due to the discrimination they had experienced in education in these countries (Roma Education Fund, 2011). The experiences described in this report, and the image it conveyed of the Czech Republic, was at odds with the image of Czech society and culture that had been promoted to me as a student of the language, which was one of a tolerant, open, and mostly equal society.

Having seen first-hand the problems encountered by schoolchildren from ethnic or linguistic minority backgrounds in Scottish schools, I wondered how schools in the Czech Republic handled the challenges of political and economic transformation alongside the requirement to uphold the obligations set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to ethnic minority children (United Nations, 1989). Further reading on the subject made me aware of widespread and systematic discrimination against Roma in schools (e.g. Amnesty International, 2010). When I broached the topic with Czech friends, I was surprised at the extent to which seeing Roma as an “Other” in Czech society was a commonplace view, even among those who took pride in the Czech Republic's secularism and supposed tolerance. This led me to question how people reached conclusions about what constituted

[2] United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): “States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education” (28:3); “The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.” (29:1 (c)) (United Nations, 1989).

"Czechness", and whether their educational experiences might play a role in forming these ideas. Might schools contribute to the perceived acceptability of "Othering" those seen as not belonging to the nation through defining the boundaries of belonging and not? How questions of identity and belonging are negotiated is particularly interesting in the Czech context, given the relative newness of the Czech Republic (or Czechia)[3] as an independent state, and the multiple incarnations of statehood the territory had undergone in the twentieth century – from forming a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through the First, Second and Third Czechoslovak Republics to independent statehood in 1993.

1.3 The Focus and Context of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the relationship between experiences of the Czech education system and perceptions of Czech identity. The data was gathered from a range of sources: students, teachers, policy documents, and textbooks. This investigation is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on influences from my previous studies, which have included cultural studies, languages, social sciences, and education – disciplines that overlap and intersect with each other. In order to position this study within these disciplines, I will briefly outline the most influential ideas of these fields, thus explaining the background to this thesis.

Rejecting the idea that nationality is an innate characteristic of humanity, discourses on nationalisms and nation-building often note that "universal, standardized, and generic" education has an important role in producing the kind of societies that we recognize as "nations" (Gellner, 1983, p. 28). However, remarks about the place of education in modern nations tend to serve as corollaries to the more generalized thesis of nations being a product of the modern age. These link the formation of modern nations to both the industrial age's requirement for a skilled workforce, and to the establishment of other modern institutions such as "parliaments, popular literature, courts … labour markets" (Breuilly, 1996). This straightforward correlation between the development of mass education and industrialization

[3] The name "Czechia" replaced "The Czech Republic" as the official English translation of the short version of the country's name in United Nations databases in 2016 (Czech Foreign Ministry, 2016).

is challenged by Green (2013), who points to the "uneven" development of economies and education systems, and attributes much greater importance to the process of deliberate state formation (p. 298), suggesting that schooling has had an even more central role in building modern nations than either Gellner (1983) or Breuilly (1996) attribute to it.

The presence of subjects such as "Citizenship Studies" and "Religious and Moral Education" across formal curricula in many school systems attests to the persistent belief that schools possess the power to inculcate values as part of a state-building process. This might be achieved through curriculum content and design, the content of textbooks, or even through the social activities that schoolchildren are exposed to in the course of their compulsory education (BEMIS, 2013; Pingle, 1999). Gellner concludes that education "universal, standardized, and generic - *really* plays some essential part in the effective working of a modern society" and that "To understand what that role is, we must . . . consider not merely the mode of production of modern society, but above all its mode of *reproduction*"[4] (1983, p. 28) – chief among these being the state school system.

Bourdieu's (2010) theory of cultural reproduction in which education is central to reproducing societal inequalities through acts of "symbolic violence" is also influential. This concept is more directly applied to the context of pedagogical practice by Bernstein (2000), whose theoretical framework of the categorization of knowledge through symbolic boundaries is used to analyse developments in the Czech education system and their impact in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Although it does not work in isolation, the school system is an important mechanism of instructing the young in the prevailing language, manners, and morals of the nation (Brubaker, 1992). These are the symbolic boundaries through which membership of the national in-group is usually identified.

The ideas of Bourdieu (2010) and Bernstein (2000) regarding the role of established elites as arbiters of pedagogic discourse and perpetrators of "symbolic violence" inform the exploration of schools' uniquely powerful position in shaping national cultures, wherein they have the potential to perpetuate, exacerbate, or mitigate existing inequalities. By placing it within

[4] Emphasis in original.

the theoretical framework of discourses on symbolic reproduction, this thesis situates the discussion of educational reform within the wider context of contemporary Czech society, exploring how education interacts with other cultural influences and how these influences combine to contribute to identification with a national in-group.

The context of post-communist transformation is also important. Under the communist regimes of the USSR and Central and Eastern Europe, an important function of education was as a system of ideological indoctrination, even though its success in fulfilling this function is debatable (King, 1963; Smith, 1997). A decade of rapid political transformation between the late 1980s and the late 1990s saw the dismantling of the communist education systems in Central and Eastern Europe but, given the Soviet influence of the preceding forty years, the removal of communist ideology from curricula created an ideological vacuum. However, the collapse of communism did not leave behind a *tabula rasa* on which to build a new system, and historical influences must be considered when analysing the development of the Czech school system since that time.

As Grossman notes, it is almost clichéd to speak of socio-political changes provoking re-negotiation of identities, but as with most clichés it contains an element of truth, and the re-assertion of national identities was one element of this process, perhaps filling the ideological void left by the dismantling of the political system (2002, pp. 4-5). Therefore, this context must be taken into account with its attendant consequences for educational development and implications for the formation of citizens' identities. However, the specificities of Czech experience of communism, in which the distinction between the public and private sphere was very pronounced (Holý, 1996, p. 21), and an "an authentic public sphere had all but ceased to exist thanks to extensive state interventions in almost all areas of life"[5] (Orság, 2015, p. 184). should be borne in mind; it is possible that the renegotiation of the state's official or public identity did not prompt a similarly urgent renegotiation of personal identity. Nevertheless, one of the common features of the post-1989 "transition" period (which later became known as the "transformation" period)

[5] *"Autentická veřejná sféra v důsledku masivních mocenských intervencí do všech sfér života společnosti prakticky přestala existovat"*[5].

was an increase in expressions of nationalist sentiment, often in the guise of "racist extremism" (Muižnieks, 1995). In the protests leading up to the revolutions in 1989, national symbols were regularly invoked, both in the Czech lands and throughout Central and Eastern Europe (Holý, 1996; Kubik, 1994), and in the Czech case "The demand for freedom was expressed in the context of strong nationalist sentiment and was understood by the demonstrators and the government alike as an anti-government protest" (Holý, 1996, p.53)[6], which seems to suggest that nationalism went some way towards filling the space left by discredited communist ideology in public discourses at least. According to Holý, though, this goes further, as he argues that "Nationalism, government, and personhood are intertwined and draw upon one another"(ibid.)[7], and one of the ways they might do this is through mass education shaping the public consciousness. In relation to the first reforms of the education system, it seems like this resurgence of nationalism, together with a tendency to look back nostalgically to the inter-war years as a sort of "golden age" in education, helped shape the character of the education system in the early transformation period, which sought to emulate pre-communist structures (Mitter, 1992). However, the desire to have the symbolic "return to Europe" validated by EU membership prompted further changes to education policy. The 2004 Schools Act (MŠMT, 2004) brought the Czech school system into step with European legislation, yet "progressive" reforms have not been universally welcomed and some argue that standards have declined as a result (Greger, 2011). The rights of national minorities to equal access to education are also assured by EU law, but the sluggish response to the case of *D.H. And Others* (2006) - which successfully challenged the segregation of Roma pupils in Czech Schools at the ECHR - shows, there continue to be cultural barriers to the realisation of equal rights (Amnesty International, 2010).

1.4 Aims and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the impact of political transformation in the Czech Republic on the development of: (a) educational policy and practice and (b)

[6] *"Požadavek svobody byl však vyjádřen v kontextu silného národního cítěni a demonstranti, stejně jako vláda, jej chápali jako protivládní protest"* (Holý, 2001, p. 55).
[7] *"Nacionalismus, vláda a jednotlivec byly taky vzájemně provázány a jeden byl odvozován z druhého"* (ibid.).

Czech national identities; (c) how individual Czechs perceive their nation and their own place in it; and (d) how their experiences of schooling impacted on their identities. There are four central research questions that the study will address:

1. **In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?**

The main data source used to answer this question is policy documents produced by the Czech Ministry of Education [MŠMT][8] in the early 2000s, namely the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] (2001) and *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání*[9] [RVP] (2007), particularly insofar as they are concerned with history (*dějepis*) and citizenship education (*občanská nauka*) in the upper stages of primary school (grades 6 to 9). This is complemented by supplementary data gathered during the interviews with teachers and students involved in the school system during the 1990s and early 2000s.

2. **How have people's experiences of the Czech education system impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens?**

The semi-structured interviews with students are the main source of data for this section. Answering this question relies on the researcher's interpretation of the answers given by participants and will be a subjective (although reflective) interpretation of the data gathered.

3. **How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?**

This question is approached through the analysis of key policy documents, in the context of EU norms and recommendations, and supplemented by responses from participants from both the student and teacher groups, as well as by analysis of recent history and citizenship textbooks for grades 6 to 9.

4. **What are the potential implications on the development of identities of minority groups, particularly Roma, continuing to face segregation in schools and other structural barriers to education?**

[8] *Ministerstvo školství, mládeže, a tělovýchovy.*
[9] Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education.

The persistent segregation of Roma pupils in Czech schools has come under intense scrutiny from organizations such as Amnesty International (2010, 2015) and the Roma Education Fund (2012). Reports produced by these organizations are contrasted with views expressed during interviews with both students and teachers to represent differing perspectives on how this issue affects Czech society. The sampling methods used, and the small scale of the study meant that it was not possible to recruit any Roma participants to take part in the study. This issue is further discussed in Section 4.3. Although having Roma participants might have provided useful insights and alternative perspectives, the researcher chose not to select participants based on ethnicity, as the study was intended to be open to anyone who had attended primary school (*základní škola*) in the Czech Republic in the relevant period. The researcher had no personal contacts within the Roma population, and none of those who responded to the public call for participants identified as Roma.

Providing answers to these four questions using data from the range of sources described enables this study to provide an overview of how Czech education has developed since 1989 and what the major influences have been on this development. It also allows for an interpretation of how successfully the school system has been used as an instrument of nation-building in creating citizens with strong ties to the nation, and the implications of this for an increasingly heterogeneous society.

As well as considering the socio-political context of educational reform, this study uses qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews, conducted both online and in person) to provide detailed information about individuals' experience of state-schooling in the Czech Republic since 1989. The use of qualitative data means that a picture is constructed of how decisions taken at education policy level are played out at the level of the individual, and the implications for how participants see themselves and their place in society.

As the study is mainly inductive in its approach, it does not seek to prove a particular hypothesis, but to explore the interaction between institutions and social actors. Constructivism is the main underpinning epistemology, which assumes that “people including researchers, construct the realities in which they participate” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 342). Therefore,

rather than producing a generalisable theory about the impact of education on Czechs' national identities, this study will provide a detailed overview of the peoples' experiences of education and how they perceive themselves as citizens.

The ontological approach to analysing the data gathered is interpretive, in that it seeks to “grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008, p. 694) as it is perceived by both the researcher and participants, with the overall aim of providing a reflective interpretation of the data studied. The analysis of policy, together with peoples' lived experience of the education system, provides possible explanations for the gaps between policy and practice in Czech education, as well as exploring its impact on participants' identities. Taking a multidisciplinary approach drawing from Czech Studies and Education allows this study to go beyond the analysis of policy documents and curricula, providing rich data and a unique interpretation thereof.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The Literature Review (Chapters 2 and 3) begins by discussing different conceptions of nations and national identities and exploring the concept of alterity (Otherness) in relation to national identities, before establishing how these relate to the Czech context. It continues with a discussion of the role of education in modern nations with particular reference to history and citizenship education. This section also outlines the major philosophical influences that have shaped the development of this thesis. There follows a brief discussion of the role of education in the communist period in the Czech Republic and the influence of the Soviet Union on education during that time, providing immediate context for the period that we are concerned with, i.e. the post-1989 era until the period following the Czech Republic’s accession to the European Union in 2004, to 2013. The transformation period and the effect of regime change on both national identities and on the education system are then discussed. Approaches to the education of national ethnic and linguistic minorities is also described and contrasted in the communist and post-communist periods.

The methodology chapter (Chapter 4) describes the ontological and epistemological underpinning of the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It outlines the research procedure and methods used to gather data and

ensure that the process was conducted in an ethically sound fashion. The process of how the data accumulated was coded and analysed is then described, and the chapter concludes with reflections on the role of the researcher in the research project, discussing how validity and reliability can be achieved in spite of the necessarily subjective nature of the research process.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, is an analysis of the two major policy documents produced relating to primary education in the Czech Republic during the transformation period – the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper on Education] (2001) and the *Ramcové vzdělavácí program* [RVP] (2007). The following two chapters (6 and 7) analyse the findings from both the analysis of textbooks and the qualitative interviews. A picture of the focus of Czech education in the post EU-accession period to 2013 is provided by analysis of a set of history and citizenship textbooks from this period. The analysis looks at the topics covered, the space allocated to each, the manner of presentation of material, and the order in which subjects are introduced. The interviews are discussed under the themes that emerged during the coding process that pertain to issues of nationality, identity, and experience of education - either as a teacher or a student. The student interviews are discussed first, followed by the teacher interviews. Any overlapping themes from both sets of interviews are compared from each perspective. All of the data gathered, from interviews and textbook analysis, are considered in relation to the four research questions described above. The concluding Chapter 8 summarises the findings and discusses their wider implications.

Chapter 2 Literature Review (i) Nation-building and Nationalisms

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides context for the research by outlining some of the major discourses on nation-building and nationalisms, discussing how these apply to the Czech context. The first part of this chapter, Chapter 2.2, discusses the major theories of nation-building and nationalism, while Chapter 2.3 looks more closely at the Czech Context.

2.2 Discourses on nation-building and nationalisms

This section begins by establishing a working definition of the "nation" in section 2.2.1 and discusses the implications of this definition for notions of belonging and Otherness. Section 2.2.2, "Perspectives on Nation Building", considers how different theories of nationalisms relate to popular perceptions of nationality and belonging. Section 2.2.3 challenges the popularly perceived distinction between nationalism and patriotism, especially in relation to attitudes concerning those perceived as outside of the national "in-group". Next, Section 2.2.4 explores how notions of alterity relate to identity formation in national contexts, discussing characteristics that commonly constitute elements of national identities, and how these are distinct from other group identifications.

2.2.1 Nations, States, Identities and Alterity

Before discussion of the major theories of nationalism, it is necessary to establish more precisely what is meant by the terms "nation", "nation-state" and "national identities", so that their usage hereafter is clear. A "nation" is difficult to define precisely, as Seton-Watson asserts "no scientific definition of a nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists" (1977, p. 5). So, as a starting point we shall assume that phenomena known as "nations" exist, despite what constitutes them being ill-defined. Regardless of the amorphous nature of nations, and their modern character, Hobsbawm points out that the view "that national identification is so natural, primary and permanent as to precede history" prevails in the minds of the majority of people

(1992, p. 14). The questions raised by this conflict, i.e. between what appears to be an objective reality and the way in which it is commonly perceived, are central to this thesis. How do members of a newly independent nation-state, such as the Czech Republic, come to view themselves as part of a community, bound by shared nationality, separate from their neighbours? To begin to answer this question, we must first decide what we mean when we speak of a "nation".

Green points out, part of the ambiguity of the term "nation" is that it can refer to either a state or its population (2013, p. 1). The assertion that "a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they formed one" (Seton Watson, 1977, p. 5) is echoed by Hobsbawm's position that a nation is comprised of "any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a 'nation'" (1992, p. 8). Gellner offers up two potential definitions. The first of these recognises the importance of culture: "Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating" (1983, p. 7). This alone, however, is not enough; more crucial is the need for *mutual* recognition within the population in order to make a nation, which Gellner also utilises in a second possible definition: "Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation" (ibid.). However, shared culture and mutual recognition do not fully account for a sense of who belongs and who doesn't. Brubaker argues in favour of moving away from "groupism" altogether, as an unhelpful category that treats communities as though they are "internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes" (2009, p.164). Moving towards more "process focused" definitions that concentrate more on defining how social groups such as nations function, rather than what they are, allows for the fact that they may not be as fixed as they are generally assumed to be.

Despite the difficulty of coming to a concrete definition of the "nation", the criteria of mutual regard and recognition of members that is a recurring theme (Brubaker, 2009; Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983; Seton Watson, 1977). This occurs through the establishment of collective national identities and the creation of a binary of belonging or not belonging. This may be enacted through "top-down" process, enacted through policies such as language

education policies (Brubaker, 2011), or undertaken at an everyday level by any social actors (Brubaker, 2009). The criteria for establishing who belongs to a nation could be (and commonly are) race, ethnicity, religion, or language (Joppke, 2017; Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995). However, if we are to extrapolate the logic in doing so, the distinctions begin to look absurd, especially if we are to accept that identities are fluid rather than fixed – one's nationality does not necessarily change when one learns a new language (Joppke, 2017, p.26). Similarly, possession of a passport does not mean that a person identifies with the nationality written on it. Significant cultural distinctions can exist within ethnic groups, and cultural commonalities can cross ethnic boundaries (Brubaker, 2009). The implication of this is that official (legal) status of belonging is insufficient – people must be recognized as belonging to the nation by other members, which gives the power of withholding this recognition to elites and dominant groups within the nation.

For the purposes of this thesis, based on the above, the following assumptions about nations will be made:

1. That within a given community, people are able to recognise others as being a part of their nation or not (although this distinction may not always be clearly defined, even by those who choose to make it).
2. That, despite historical modernity and various degrees of ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity within nations, "a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation" (Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 5).
3. That most people are, in legal terms, members of at least one nation-state and have their fundamental right to a nationality protected in international law (Universal Declaration on Human Rights [UDHR], 1948, Article 15).

It does not follow, however, that having been defined, nationalities are treated as static entities. They may also be understood as fluid objects under construction (Brubaker, 2011).

Given that the Czech Republic has only existed as a sovereign nation-state in its current form since 1993, it shall be accepted that the Czech Republic largely conforms to the modernist conception of a nation, i.e. a product of the modern, industrial age. Yet Czech national identity still appears to be predicated to some extent on a sense of historical continuity - based on established narratives, myths, and symbols - that implies links to a more

ancient past (Heimann, 2009; Holý, 2001; Fawn, 2000). This suggests that how people come to consider themselves to belong to the Czech nation is a complex process involving language, history, culture, education, and tradition, among other things. For people to be able to recognise fellow members of their nation, and align their loyalties appropriately, it follows that there must be a method of transmitting the cultural signs and associations across the territory of the nation-state, as well as down through generations. A common state education system not only provides the majority of population with a mandatory shared experience, but it also incentivises conformity, given that there are significant rewards associated with successful participation, such as improved status and job prospects (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 355).

The consequences of creating a sense of belonging (or not), though, have the capacity to become enormous. Although "members of even the smallest nation will never know their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them", the perception of "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) is something for which people have been willing to kill and die for. The implications of this are becoming increasingly important in the Czech Republic, as EU countries face unprecedented levels of immigrants arriving from the Middle East. In the Czech Republic, this prompted hostile reactions and protests, as well as the much-criticized practice of numbering refugees on arrival (Bilefsky, 2015). This could be seen either as a historically ignorant bureaucratic blunder, or an attempt to assert the superiority of Czech identity in the face over an Other in the face of a perceived threat.

2.2.2 Perspectives on Nation Building

Discussing the concept of nation-building in relation to education requires acknowledgement of the assumption, associated with modernist theories of nationalisms, that an active process (or set of processes) has been undertaken by social actors to create the system of social organization that we recognize as a nation (Anderson, 2006; Hobsbawm, 1992 Gellner, 1983). This contrasts with what is generally held to be the common view of nationality, namely that being part of a nation is something natural to the human condition and that "nations have existed from time immemorial" (Ozkirimli, 2010, p. 48). This view is partially supported by the fact that nation-states have emerged as a such successful form of political organization that it seems almost natural for

people to identify with a nationality (Suny, 2001; Woolf, 1996, p. 1). However, the naturalness of identifying with a nation state, and the assumption of their eternal nature, is called into question by the fact that the twentieth century saw a proliferation of new nation-states being established as old empires collapsed, prompting Deutsch's remark that ". . . we no longer discuss whether men can do these things. We observe that they are doing them" (1966, p. vi). However, this raises questions about how these "new" nation states came into being and established themselves as legitimate forms of political organization despite their evident "newness". As the formation (or attempted formation) of new nation-states continues into the twenty-first century, so too do discussions over what constitutes a nation, what it means to belong to a nation, and how belonging to a nation forms part of a personal identity. These discussions have particular resonance in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland and Hungary, where political transformation and EU membership have been accompanied by a rise in expressions of nationalist sentiments (Fox and Vermeersch, 2010; Mudde, 2005).

The assumption that nations are a natural and eternal unit of societal organization is a central feature of primordialist views of nationality which stand in opposition to the constructivist thinking on the subject adopted by the majority of modernist scholars (Bayar, 2009). Primordialism emphasizes shared history and origins to confirm "the naturalness of nations by indefinite extension into the past" (Haugaard, 2006). This is generally the way in which most people conceive of their own nationality in everyday life – as something natural, God given, or heritable, as opposed to something that has been created as part of a conscious process undertaken by an elite (Ozkirimli, 2010, p.49). Gat and Yakobson add a socio-biological dimension to the discussion, stating that nations "are rooted in primordial human sentiments of kin–culture affinity, solidarity, and mutual cooperation, evolutionarily engraved in human nature" (2013, p. 380). These strands of shared history, "common-sense" perceptions of belonging, and biological rootedness can combine to create a powerful nationalism that enables nation states to "willingly send, indeed sacrifice, their young in battle, while these young eagerly and proudly kill or die for unknown members of their communities" (Langman, 2006). The power of nationalism to arouse such uncritical loyalty to the *nation,* resulting in

actions that might go against an individual's best interests is a persistent puzzle which modernist writers on the subject have sought to address.

The modernist perspective on nation-building, "emerged as a reaction to the self-evident primordialism of the older generations" (Ozkirmili, 2010, p. 49). Gellner aligns the birth of the period of nation-building with the dawn of the industrial era and rejects the prevailing notion that it is an inevitable characteristic. He criticises the persistence of the primordialist perspective in modern nation states, pointing out that that "having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such" and believes that education plays a central role in making it appear so (Gellner, 1983, p. 6). For Gellner, the modern nation is centralized and homogeneous, in which distinction of so-called "sub-communities" is erased by education and the need for precise, universally intelligible communication among its members; this in turn leads to a homogenization of culture through education, cementing the link between state and culture that characterizes nationalism (1983, pp. 32-33).

Whilst Gellner does not attribute the circumstances that create nationalism to a deliberate plan (1983, p.61) - rather the conditions of modernity create the conditions for both nations and nationalism - Hobsbawm and Ranger's edited work examines more closely how primordialist views about nationality came to be widely accepted through "invented traditions". These are defined as practices "of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Gellner, 1983, p. 1). One example is the "invention" of the Scottish "highland tradition" with its distinctive markers of tartan and bagpipes, whose origins are decidedly less ancient than they first appear (Trevor-Roper, 1983). Other "invented traditions" include the national celebration of Bastille Day in France, and the daily salutation of the Stars and Stripes in American classrooms (Hobsbawm, 1983). The apparent artifice and evident modernity of these traditions underlines the incongruity of associating these kinds of symbolic identity markers with a group's inherited right to inhabit a given territory.

However, even the apparent diametric opposition of the primordial and modernist perspectives (i.e. that nations are natural and eternal *versus* that

nations are a construct of the modern era) becomes uncertain when applied to real-world situations. For example, Suny (2001) describes his emotional pain when his own loyalty to his nation is questioned after delivering a lecture on the need for more open-minded cosmopolitanism in Albania, his homeland. On the other hand, Gat and Yakobson (2013) (who broadly represent primordialist thinking in the subject) – still acknowledge the modernity of nation-states as units of organization. Neither perspective fully explains either the nature of nations, or the attachment that members feel towards them. This creates something of a false dichotomy for the consideration of nationalisms.

Ethno-symbolism to some extent bridges the gap between primordial views on nationality and Gellner's orthodox modernism. It acknowledges the importance of pre-existing societal structures and community affiliations which allow us to recognize a degree of continuity between pre-modern societal structures and the nations that exist today (Ozkirimili, 2010, p. 143). Anderson advocates understanding nationalism "by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being" (2006, p. 12), recognising that the form of modern nations is rarely arbitrary, but shaped by the affiliations and organisational structures that existed previously. The importance of mutual recognition to the formation of nations is also noted. This mutual recognition is made possible through the ability to communicate via a common, official version of the national language (Langman, 2006). This results in the formation of an "in-group" composed of those who participate, *and* the exclusion of those who are unable to partake in this system of communication, thereby forming an "out-group" or Other. This process creates a symbolic boundary of a "psychological rather than territorial nature" (Armstrong, 2001, p. 198), which defines the parameters of the nation for its members. This accounts for the fact that national identifications do not always coincide with the geographical or political boundaries of the nation. While language and the ability to communicate with other members of the nation is a key marker of belonging, Smith points out the importance of symbolic interaction in the process of nation-building through "... sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (1999, p. 11). These rituals and institutions embed the nation, but do not create it, as

“most nations … were based on ethnic ties and on popular ethnic traditions, which have provided the cultural resources for later nation-formation” (Smith, 1999, p. 13). This approach presumes a greater level of interaction between the elite nation-builders of the modern era and the communities that pre-dated them than modernism does, whilst still accepting nation-building as a process that has taken place in the modern era. It acknowledges that more than “subjective and symbolic resources” are important factors in creating a shared identity and motivating citizens to collective action, rather than kinship bonds (Smith, A.D., 2009, p. 16). These symbolic resources are what enables people to identify with a nation, as they become embedded in the practices and rituals of everyday life. They become part of a “banal nationalism” that is rarely articulated as nationalism as such, until the national *status quo* comes under threat (Bilig, 1995, p. 6).

All of the above conceptions of nations and nationalisms are based on the idea of the nation as a discoverable “out there” entity which exists, to some extent, apart from its members. However, another perspective is that nations themselves are not fixed entities, but constantly under construction by the institutions and members that comprise them, not according to any definite plan, but through the actions of their members and the construction of “texts” that both express and constitute their form (Smith, 1999, p. 168). Brubaker (1996) supports the view that nation-building (or “nationalizing”) is a process that was undertaken by post-socialist states whose territorial boundaries shifted following the collapse of communist regimes. Nationalization processes were undertaken to “restore” the nations that had been damaged or undermined by the experience of communist rule. Crucially, Brubaker’s (2011) recognition of the state as an active “agent” of nationalism, and as an entity simultaneously “undergoing” nationalisation in an interactive process, goes some way towards capturing the complexity of the process of nation-building in post-socialist states, such as the Czech Republic.

This thesis explores how the tension between these opposing perspectives plays out in practice in the Czech Republic. It does not set out to prove whether Czech schools intentionally stimulate nationalist sentiment, or whether nationalistic tendencies are inevitable because the schools are Czech. Rather it looks at how different ideas about the nation are represented

in schools, through policy, curriculum content, and the attitudes of teachers to explore the ways in which experiences of education might influence people's identities. Therefore, it is necessary to take all of the above perspectives into consideration when considering how experiences of schooling might impact on citizens' identities.

2.2.3 Nationalisms – Good and Bad?

Articulations of superiority of any nationality might be assumed to have their source in a sense of pride. Pride in one's country, or "patriotism", elevates a deadly sin to a much-lauded virtue under the right circumstances. Distinguishing between "nationalism" and "patriotism" has implications for the potential exclusion or derogation of those seen as not belonging to the nation. It is therefore an important consideration when dealing with the relationship between experiences of education and the formation of national identities. It raises questions over if and how to inculcate "patriotic values", and whether doing so necessarily leads to the development of exclusionary "nationalistic" sentiments in the population.

Much like the concept of a nation, the idea of "nationalism" can be nebulous, but when considered in relation to the almost synonymous term "patriotism", it is clear that the former carries more negative connotations of out-group exclusion and association with violent acts (Billig, 1995, p. 5), whereas the latter is more commonly associated in "common parlance" with pride in one's country which does not necessitate the exclusion of "outsiders" (Hechter, 2001, p17). Although accepting that there may be some merit to nationalist sentiments that have no apparent bias toward any particular in-group and preach the right of *all* nations to self-determination, Gellner acknowledges that humans are prone to making "exceptions on one's own behalf" (1983, p. 2). Pointing out that "the political effectiveness of national sentiment would be much impaired if nationalists had as fine a sensibility to the wrongs committed by their nation as the wrongs committed against it" (ibid.), he underscores the difficulty of separating pride in belonging and denigration of those on the outside.

Billig notes that words like "patriotism" and "loyalty" are preferred when describing "our" (the national or cultural "in-group's") beliefs, whereas "Nationalists can be identified as extremists, who, impelled by a violent

emotional psychology seek irrational ends" (1995, p. 15). Either that or they can be cast "as heroic figures who, in particular can be found overseas battling against repressive colonialists" (ibid.). He goes on to argue that such differentiation is misleading and that "our"[10] attachments and national identifications must also be located within the age of nationalism, therefore using the term "nationalism" only to describe the behaviour of other nationalities carries heavy ideological implications.

Rather than view nationalism and patriotism as the "bad" and "good" sides of the same coin, Gellner sees patriotism as a description of the perennial loyalty men hold towards their own social groups, however these groups are defined. To him, nationalism is a divergent "sub-species" of patriotism, of which "Homogeneity, literacy, anonymity are the key traits" (1983, pp. 137-8). Nationalism so defined is what allows for the politicisation of these feelings of loyalty, which when mobilised can lead to the type of collective action that Gellner terms "nationalist movements", which can have far reaching, and sometimes bloody, consequences. The distinction between nationalism and patriotism is also rejected by Hechter, who argues that behaviours and expressions that commonly attributed to patriotism in fact implicitly support the interests of one national group over others and can therefore more accurately be described as state-building nationalism (2000, p. 17). If true, this it means that even seemingly benign patriotism can be harmful – directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally – to the interests of national minority groups.

The necessity of out-group exclusion for positive identification with an in-group is sometimes tackled with claims to reject exclusive nationalism in favour of "civic nationalism". "Civic nationalism" conceives the nation as constituted of all of its citizens, irrespective of ethnic, racial, or other identities, as opposed to determining belonging by birth or ethnicity (Kearney, 2004, p. 230). These different approaches to nationhood and belonging are explored by Brubaker (1992), who describes two distinct European models: the (nominally inclusive) French model, based on citizenship, and the (exclusive) German model, based on heritage. The former model does not require heritage for belonging but can lead to assimilationism; the latter echoes the "blood and soil" nationalism that links a particular people to a particular

[10] In this case, Western European or North American.

territory. Both are problematic, and even proponents of “civic nationalism” acknowledge exceptions and contradictions inherent in attempts at taxonomizing nationalities in this way (Hopkins, 2001). Even the example cited by Hopkins as an example of civic nationalism as a credible force in UK politics is not without undertones of out-group denigration. He quotes a 1995 speech by the then Scottish National Party [SNP] leader Alex Salmond in which Salmond states “there will be no cricket tests in an independent Scotland”. This refers to an infamous remark by English Conservative Member of Parliament Norman Tebbit in which he said that immigrants to the UK who failed to support England at cricket were not sufficiently integrated into UK society. However, the subtext of Salmond’s remark could be read as “Us Scots are not racist like those English”.

Empirical research in the field of social psychology lends an interesting perspective to the distinction between nationalism and patriotism. Mummendey et. al. (2001) examined the relationship between people's natural desire “to think positively about themselves and the groups to which they belong” and how this relates to hostility and rejection of outsiders. In the study, nationalism was associated with the latter, whereas patriotism was connected to the former. One of the key findings of the study was that inter-group comparisons were not the only means of promoting positive evaluations of participants’ in-group. Positive feelings could also be generated through temporal comparisons, but out-group derogation had a more pronounced effect where participants were initially asked to compare between groups rather than across time, or under control conditions. These results may have implications for considering the role of education systems in identity formation and attitudes towards perceived “out-groups”, as it could be argued that it is these systems that “prime” citizens for their future interactions with other social actors. This is especially critical when we consider the potential for disparity between elite and popular ideas about belonging, as mass education is one of the forums in which these ideas jostle for precedence (Brubaker, 1992, p. 163).

The difficulty of disentangling the positive values of civic responsibility that are associated with “patriotism” from the more negatively connotated “nationalism” may be consequential. Gellner (1983) suggests that the application of the terms “nationalism” and “patriotism” might, be a matter of perspective – one man's responsible patriotism may be another's aggressive

nationalism. School systems are considered an important vehicle for teaching patriotic values (Hechter, 2000, p. 66), and whilst it may not be possible for education to be value-free, the findings of Mummendy et. al. suggest caution should be employed when attempting to inculcate values of civic responsibility in the context of mass public education. As this is what "primes" citizens for adult life and their future encounters with others, it should be done with great care that a positive view of belonging does not concur with a negative view of Others.

2.2.4 Identities and Others

The notion that "'Identity' is the affirmation of who we are by contrasting nearly every element of our way of life with that of others" (Voestermans, 1991, p. 219) grants the Other a central role in identity formation. The idea that the Other serves as a point of reference against which to define oneself is strongly influenced by Foucault's (1988) discussion of society's expulsion of the insane though confinement as a means of coping with what was seen as deviant or Other. Corbey and Leerssen point out that "All human cultures articulate, situate themselves by categorizing the world" (1991, p. VI), and this impulse to categorize allows the identification – and sometimes scapegoating - of Others across a wide range of categories, such as: race, gender, class, sexuality, sanity, and religion (Gilman, 1985). This allows for the articulation of a cultural identity by "silhouetting it against the contrastive background of otherness" (Corbey and Leerssen, 1991, p. VI). Therefore a given culture needs an "Other" from which it can differentiate itself, and national cultures are no exception. However, using this category of the Other to describe what lies outwith a national culture is both useful and risky. Useful, because it encompasses a range of out-groups, both actual and potential, without the need to refer to specific groups or ethnicities; dangerous because "it carries multiple meanings and has been applied to a variety of phenomena in countless disciplines" (Grossman, 2002, pp. 2-3). It is therefore necessary, without entering into a description of the full diversity of meanings the term carries, to outline how the "Other" will be used hereafter, and to locate this usage in context of formation of national identities in the Czech Republic.

When used to refer to the Czechs', or any other national Other, the term should be understood as representing any category commonly excluded from

being considered part of the nation. However, owing to the fact that significant cultural difference is possible within the boundaries of any ethnic or national groups (Brubaker, 2009), this definition is highly subjective and variable. In relation to national identities, the Other describes what lies beyond the symbolic boundaries that encircle what is considered to be part of the nation at a given moment by a given observer who sees themselves as being part of the nation (the "in-group"). These symbolic boundaries - which can be understood as the "lines that include and define some people, groups and things while excluding others" (Epstein, 1992, p. 232) - are not fixed and are subject to construction by members of the groups. Nevertheless, distinct categories of Otherness occur in national discourses, although these might themselves be constructions of the dominant cultures (Corbey, 1991, p. x). These may be internal Others, such as an ethnic or religious minority living within the borders of the national territory (e.g. Roma in the Czech Republic), or external Others, such as neighbouring states – especially those with which the nation in question has a history of conflict, (e.g. the Czech Republic and Germany) or a geographically distant state or region perceived to be on the other side of an ideological spectrum (e.g. as the USA and USSR during the Cold War). "Others" used in any of these senses to refer to social, cultural, or national out-groups will henceforth be capitalised for clarity, to avoid confusion with its use as a regular pronoun.

Yet the identification and/or construction of an Other alone is not sufficient on its own for the category of belonging to be defined – it is also necessary for a given nation or culture to differentiate itself from its Other, by creating symbolic distance between the two categories. Defining oneself in terms of what one is *not* may be as informative as asserting what one *is*. Indeed, it may be the case that the less certain it is possible to be of a particular aspect of one's identity, the more likely one is to define the emergent identity in negative terms, i.e. in opposition to a perceived Other. The implications of this in the formation of a national identity is neatly summarised by Derrida's similarly oft quoted remark that "Every culture is haunted by its Other" (Kearney, 1984, p.116) – the Other is excluded from the culture (or nation), but also essential to it – even if only in order to be excluded. It is crucial to note, also, that the Other cannot define itself, but is identified and defined by the subject of the process – i.e. the dominant culture in a given context. If predominant attitudes, either positive or negative, are supported by legislation

or otherwise formally institutionalised (for example through education), then this can either mitigate or contribute towards the legitimisation of the "forceful exclusion of the other" in order to establish or preserve national identities.

This exclusive process of identity formation might appear necessary for nation-states to foster the sense of "deep horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 2006, p. 7) that enables the institutions that exist for the benefit, organisation, and control of its members to function within the defined parameters of the nation. It also grants the nation-state the power to determine who has the right to access its privileges and who owes it allegiance when it is under threat. However, even in the most apparently homogeneous nation-states, populations are far from culturally uniform and citizens possess identities which cannot be easily reduced to a set of characteristics. It is therefore necessary to question the extent to which the promotion of a certain "national" characteristics necessitates or facilitates the exclusion or disenfranchisement of those who do not, cannot, or do not wish to possess them, yet live on the territory of and are even legal citizens of the nation-state.

2.3 Nation-building and Nationalism in the Czech Context

This section considers the establishment of the modern Czech state in relation to the theories of nation-building outlined above. The impact of the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe on national identities in the region is considered in section 2.3.1, while the sections that follow focus more closely on the Czech lands. Section 2.3.2 outlines some key moments in Czech nation building, and 2.3.3 looks at expressions of what could be considered "national" consciousness in the middle-ages. The "national revival" of the nineteenth century is discussed in Section 2.3.4, and the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic is covered in Section 2.3.5. The Protectorate, the Third Republic and the communist period are discussed in Sections 2.3.6 to 2.3.7. This is followed by discussion of the "transformation" period in Section 2.3.8 and the process of EU accession in 2.3.9. This part of the literature review concludes by looking at Czech identity on the global stage in Section 2.3.10.

2.3.1 Elements of National Identities in Central and Eastern Europe

What constitutes a person's national identity cannot be easily quantified or classified, therefore identifying what is distinctive about national identities in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe is difficult. For some, ethnicity is a central feature of a national identity (Gat and Yakobson, 2013; Suny, 2001). This position is questioned or rejected by modernists (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1983) and proponents of a civic approach, and partially accepted by others, such as Smith (2009, p. 44), who argues that for nationalists to be able to form a nation, there must have been a "precedence". In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, despite diversity of earlier history and experiences of communism, the post-communist period saw articulations of nationalism across the region increase (Muižnieks, 2005). Although it has been suggested that nationalism may have been part of the process of democratization, it has tended toward exclusive, ethnically based nationalism (Balázs, 2014).

The symbolic articulations of ethnic identities that become crystallised into national identities might include language, modes of dress, or architecture. Such cultural items may be utilized by states to foster a sense of belonging (Boym, 2001, pp. 42-43), in addition to more official elements such as the flag, national anthem, and national institutions. These expressions of the state's identity tend to represent the *dominant* ethnic group, rather than the entire population of a territory of which a nation may be comprised (Smith, 2009, p.44); as Joppke (2017) notes, "even the liberal state … cannot quite dissociate itself from majority culture" (p. 15). In the states of Central and Eastern Europe, utilizing the "symbols, memories, traditions and myths of their dominant ethnies provided these new national states with their public cultures, their symbolic codes and repertoires, and many of their laws and customs" (Smith, 2009, p. 44). However, as well as providing an identity distinct from the communist past, making use of specifically national symbols also has potential to act as an exclusionary force in cases where there is an ethnic, religious, or cultural internal Other who does not identify with them (Brubaker, 1996). Therefore these "public cultures" and "symbolic codes" became the markers of a national identity, recognisable not only to the titular "in-group",

but to members of other ethnic “out-groups”, forming a symbolic boundary that demarcates belonging.

As the fluid and layered nature of identities is increasingly acknowledged (Brubaker, 2009; Corbey and Leerssen, 1991), the very fact that identities are not fixed means that almost any attributes can be appropriated and incorporated into official or popular discourses and become part of a “national” identity, which may be encoded into a symbolic representation. This is sometimes manifested in the image of an ideal citizen, which is projected on to an allegorical (e.g. the Marianne in France) or heroic historical figure (such as Jan Hus in the Czech Republic), who are portrayed as embodying the values and ideals of the nation at any given time. Like religious icons, they are easily recognisable, but anonymous enough to be pliable. Just as in Catholic cultures, the Virgin Mary appears in different contexts to represent purity, sacrifice, innocence, or love depending on the context in which she is situated (Prospero, 2014), so the meaning of these allegorical or historical figures is also flexible (Mock, 2014, p. 257).

During the transformation period in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe the increased influence of churches associated with traditional national cultures (for example the Catholic church in Poland and the Orthodox church in Russia) made religious affiliation a key signifier of national identities in the early transformation period. Alongside this, other markers of belonging emerged, notably the re-establishment of traditional gender roles and emphasis on the importance of the family (Stulhofer and Sandfort, 2005). As religion began to alter the nature of the official national image, it also changed what constituted Otherness, and the denigration of homosexuality became increasingly common (Grossman, 2002, pp. 4-5). The deliberate Othering of what were deemed to be undesirable characteristics in members of a nation (such as homosexuality in a nation where reproduction is seen as a duty) might emerge through public discourses, as in Poland (Porter-Szűcs, 2011), but might also be enshrined in law – an example being Russia's ban on homosexual “propaganda” to under 18s (Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offences Article 6.13.1 Propaganda of homosexualism among minors, 2002). Whilst stopping short of banning homosexuality, this law clearly communicates to citizens what the national elite considers acceptable or desirable in its citizens. In this way, (hetero)sexuality becomes a marker of belonging to the nation. The cost of non-conformity is to become part of the

Other, which can have consequences of real-world disenfranchisement. As Joppke argues, the trend in more "liberal" states towards promoting equal rights for gay people is consistent with recognising the rights of the individual to live as they choose in a multicultural society, as states move away from imposing "a uniform, most often expressly Christian, way of life on all members of society" (2017, p. 17). However, in less liberal states, almost any personal characteristics, it seems, from language through religion to sexual orientation can constitute a boundary between the national in-group and the Other. Yet it is unlikely that all the members of the in-group necessarily possess all of the attributes associated with the ideal citizen, certainly not all of the time. Nevertheless, these attributes remain universally recognizable and aspirational because they are effectively communicated and institutionalized through mechanisms such as public ceremonies, public holidays, the media, and mass education (Smith, 1991, p. 22). Within these symbolic myths, an especially potent sub-category is that of "symbols of defeat", which is particularly important in defining a national identity against an Other (Mock, 2014). They often play a key role in the foundation myths of the nation as well as enhancing "the political effectiveness of national sentiment", which is ensured by the perception "sensibility to the wrongs committed against [the nation]" (Gellner, 1983, p. 2). Symbols of sacrifice and defeat, according to Mock, are uniquely placed to reconcile the conflict between the modernity of the nation and the need for a historical symbolic narrative (2014, p. 12). They also provide a common "enemy" of the nation, an historical Other against which it can define itself.

It is this codification and communication of symbolic traits that constitutes the "invention" of tradition which is propagated (chiefly by elites) and seeks to inculcate certain norms and values "by repetition ... In fact, where possible they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p.1). The establishment of apparent cohesion with a long history is important to the development of national myths. These include foundation myths (such as the story of *Praotec Čech*[11]), the stories of military heroes (such as Jan Žižka[12] in the Czech Republic or Tadeusz Kościuszko[13]

[11] "Father Czech," the legendary forefather of the Czech people.
[12] A popular Hussite military leader.
[13] Leader of a Polish uprising in 1794 (Kościuszko uprising) who went on to fight in the American War of Independence.

in Poland), or allegorical figures such as *Matka Polka*[14]. According to Holý (1996), establishing a historical narrative that links the present nations to the heroic past alleviates the cognitive dissonance involved with reconciling the image of the ideal citizen with the lived experience of interacting with fellow members of the nation. Smith argues that these symbolic narratives are cultural elements which are "as much a part of social reality as any material or organisational factors" (2009, p. 25). This might partially explain why the ethnic or primordialist view of the nation is so persistent throughout Central and Eastern Europe (Balázs, 2014, p. 34), despite being largely dismissed in elite discourses (Brubaker, 1992, p. 163).

2.3.2 Key Moments in Czech Nation Building

Describing what are now considered formative events in Czech history is necessary to outline the process by which, after spending centuries as part of a multi-ethnic empire and sharing territory with other ethno-linguistic groups, Czechs have come to "recognise a common level of cultural identity and in numerous contexts talk about themselves as an undifferentiated community sharing a single culture" (Holý, 1996, p. 12). A history of Czech nation-building and identity is by nature selective, and its inclusion here is done with the awareness that it risks becoming a part of the discourse that it seeks to analyse. However, this is justified as some understanding of how the past is commonly perceived is necessary to be able to discuss the impact interpretations of that past can have upon identities and ideas about belonging.

This chapter outlines the events that led to the establishment of an independent Czech state and locate it within the theories of nation-building previously discussed. Significant periods will be discussed, from the Middle Ages, through the National Revival (*Národní obrození)* of the nineteenth century, up to independent statehood and EU membership. It will focus on events which either had a significant impact on the education system or saw the Czech nation redefine its relations with significant Others.

[14] "Mother Poland" Named after a poem by Adam Mickiewicz *"Oda do matki polki"*, she is a "symbolic self-sacrificing figure of great moral strength" (Tieszen, 2007, p. 200).

2.3.3 Nascent Nationalism in the Middle Ages?

Dominant narratives of Czech history tend to trace the origins of the modern nation at least as far back as the middle-ages, when the Czech crown was the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, and the name (if not the geography!) of Bohemia was known as far away as Shakespeare's England[15] (Šmahel, 2011). The Middle Ages and the Hussite period nowadays symbolise a "Golden Age" before what is sometimes called the "three hundred years of darkness" that followed the Battle of White Mountain in 1620.

That this view of the Middle Ages might be as much the product of Romantic nationalisms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries adopting medievalism as a credible rationale for claims of autonomy, and enshrined into the national narrative in the nineteenth century by seminal texts such as Palacký's *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě*[16], which places the period at the "zenith" of the Czech's "historical importance" (Palacký, 2007), must be considered. Certainly, modern writers such as Heimann (2009) and Šmahel (2011) tend to take a critical approach to the utilisation of symbolic events of the middle-ages by later writers. Using the medieval past to give legitimacy to claims to self-determination is by no means unique to the Czech Republic (Marchal, 2011), although the persistence and pervasiveness of narratives of the medieval period is perhaps notable.

In spite of this, the existence of a "national" movement, or at least the beginnings of one (that may be cautiously described as proto-nationalism) seems to be an accepted view of some writers on Czech history. Logan claims Hus was, during his lifetime, "the foremost voice of Czech nationalism" (2002, p. 327). However, this potentially confuses Hus's rebellion against the Catholic church with national aspirations. It is worth considering whether the "nationalist" aspect of Hussitism has been imposed retrospectively, or if the movement against the Roman Catholic church was a reaction to perceived Germanic dominance over Czechs. The importance of language to modern nationalism does not necessarily mean that medieval declarations about language equate to a sense of nationalism according to our present

[15] In Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, Antigonus announces that his ship has washed up on the shores of Bohemia – a geographical unlikelihood, given the landlocked nature of the territory.
[16] "History of the Czech Nation".

understanding. On the other hand, linking early Protestantism with the strengthening of ethno-linguistic communities appears logical, since Protestantism's aim of making the word of God accessible through the vernacular could feasibly have played a role in strengthening group identities.

Hus certainly seems to have, at times, railed against Germanisation (Šmahel, 2015), asserting that "Praguers as well as other Czechs would also deserve flagellation now for speaking half-Czech and half-German" (Hus, 1952). The assertion of Czech identity by Hus posits itself against the perceived dominance in the church and society of the German speaking population. Prague does seem to have experienced some tension and even power struggle between speakers of the dominant tongues, Czech and German. Logan (2013) cites a "Czech critic" saying "The Germans completely controlled the university. The Czechs were helpless . . . And the Germans also controlled the kingdom, having the secular offices, while the Czechs had nothing". However, the exact source of this citation is unclear, and it is questionable whether it accurately represents the situation. Demetz, on the other hand, points out that although the Germans of Prague were generally speaking better off than their Czech speaking counterparts, this is a somewhat simplistic view, although reflective of an overall trend (1997, p. 81). It is conceivable, then, that economic disparity between the two groups may have produced a resentment of the Other, coalescing along linguistic lines or differing attitudes to the Papal Schism.

In considering whether or not claims to linguistic autonomy, and power struggles between different ethnic groups constitute an sort of proto-nationalism present in the Middle-Ages, it is perhaps sufficient to state that during that period the relationship between language, power, identity and religion was not straightforward, and that historical accounts of the period are best thought of as interpretations, and as such should be approached from a cautious historiographical perspective.

2.3.4 The National Revival

The Czech National Revival took on a form much like that of other nations which did not develop inside an established state in that: "an ethnic group was brought to the awareness of its collective identity ('awakened') by an elite which eventually presented claims in its name to constitutional and

international recognition" (Suda, 2001, p. 255). This type of ethnic nationalism first appeared in the early nineteenth century, before which "the claim that all states should be based on the ethnic nation was a radically new one – an impossibility, if not an absurdity, before the nineteenth century" (Kumar, 2006, p. 23). This ethnic model of nationalism differed from prior examples, such as the English or French models in which the nation (or the national consciousness) developed *within* a pre-existing state structure (ibid.). Therefore, it appears that the concept of "civic nationalism" came before Central and East European ethnic nationalism, yet it was this new model, previously considered "absurd" or "impossible" that came to dominate nationalist discourses in the Czech lands thereafter.

The role of national symbols and historical narrative was critical to the development of a credible claim for Czech autonomy, and the more distant dream of independent statehood. First among these was the Czech language – the "principal identity sign" of the Czech nation at this time "was the 'tongue'" (Suda, 2001, p. 1). This was crucial, because, at this point it allowed for the mutual recognition of belonging to the group or nation, as distinct from the ethnic Other – in this case German speakers with whom Czechs "shared geographical, political, and economic space within the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (Holý, 1996, p. 5), as well as the German or Yiddish speaking Jewish population. As discussed previously, creating this binary of belonging or not is essential to developing an identity in relation to an "Other". However, as Suda (2001) points out, the early Czech revivalists were not politically motivated, but rather more Romantically focused on preserving the language and culture as "relic" of a simpler way of life. There was no explicit claim that a Czech state should be based on the ethnic Czech nation. Nevertheless, as time passed, and the economy became more industrialised, the Czech national movement gathered momentum.

Havránek (1967) traces the development of this movement alongside the economic developments which were taking place in terms of cause and effect, supporting the modernist idea that the modern industrial era provided the conditions for, and necessitated the creation of, a nation state built more or less along ethnic lines in spite of the dominance of German as the language of administration. He points out that:

> "The Czechs had a real need for readers and almanacs, instructions for cattle breeding, and similar kinds of books published in the Czech

language . . . It was therefore at least partly practical necessity that promoted the rebirth of Czech as a literary language" (1967, p. 23).

If the national movement had begun with a Romantic notion of preserving or promoting an ethnic group as a cultural curio and gained impetus through economic necessity, it began to emerge as a political movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly after the revolution of 1848 failed to achieve the desired autonomy for the ethnic groups of Austro-Hungary. However, in order to develop legitimacy, the Czech nation needed to establish a historical narrative that tied the ethno-linguistic group to the territory. The historian Palacký, often regarded as the "father of the Czech nation" played a key role in this with his *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě,* which went up only as far as 1526 (Heimann, 2009, p. 13).

In spite of the growth of exclusively Czech institutions throughout the late nineteenth century, at this time identification with Czech or Slovak identity "was still a political choice" rather than an accident of birth (Heimann, 2009, p.14). Thus, the symbols and traditions of the "Great Czech Nation" had to be consolidated, propagated or, as Hobsbawm might have it, "invented". These symbols might be historical figures (e.g. Jan Hus, St. Wenceslas, Comenius), institutional (e.g. the National Theatre and National Museum), or historical (e.g. White Mountain). Their "national" significance may be attributed post-facto (Sayer, 1998, pp. 53-62). Alongside the codification of the language, the symbols of Czech statehood and nationhood that had particular prominence in the National Revival were the figures of St. Wenceslas and Jan Hus (Holý, 1996: 36-39). Both sacrificial figures, (Wenceslas was assassinated by his brother, Boleslav the Cruel; Hus was burned at the stake at by the Catholic Church for heresy) they appeared to embody the attributes that the Czech revivalists would have attributed to the Czech nation – rationality, scholarship, and moral fibre – as well as the crucial element of being prevented from reaching their true potential owing to the aggression of Others.

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the salience of such symbols entrenched as they began to be systematically disseminated through "national" institutions. It was this era that saw the establishment of the National Museum and National Theatre, the founding of parallel Czech and German faculties at Charles University in Prague, and a flourishing of cultural output on nationalistic themes (Heimann, 2009, p. 16; Sayer, 1998, p. 71-74; Holý, 1996, p. 38). It was also around this time that the ultimate "symbol of defeat",

the Battle of White Mountain *(Bílá Hora)* which led to the departure of Bohemian Protestant aristocracy and the re-Catholicisation of the region, was re-cast as a Czech defeat, rather than a Protestant one (Heimann, 2009, p. 3), a "turning point from independence to domination" (Mock, 2004, p. 175). Identification with martyrdom and victimhood, and the narrative of being an oppressed minority within a powerful empire, gained traction as these symbols recurred in the national culture, assisted by the work of historians Balbín and Palacký (Pynsent, 1994, pp. 176-177). The skilful deployment of symbols of oppression by Czech émigrés during the First World War - in particular by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk – helped lend legitimacy to claims for territorial autonomy that eventually led to the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

2.3.5 The First Republic

The formation of the First Czechoslovak Republic was by no means inevitable, and indeed "had not been seriously contemplated by anyone" up until the end of WWI and that it was the skilful and opportunistic exploitation of the circumstances of the war - perhaps compounded by Western ignorance of, or apathy towards, the nationalities of Austro-Hungary - that allowed a small group of charismatic proponents of Czech independence to make a case for it (Heimann, 2009, p. 5). The success of these lobbying tactics was cemented in Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points", which included a commitment to "The people of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development" (Wilson, 1918, no pagination). There may also have been an element of pragmatic self-interest on the part of the Allies in promoting the establishment of nation states in the region as a "a *cordon sanitaire* between defeated Germany and emasculated but revolutionary Russia" (Fawn, 2000, p. 2). The linguistic similarity of Czechs and Slovaks was to override their divergent histories to create an amalgamated majority over other ethno-linguistic groups (e.g. German, Hungarian, and Polish speakers) that could not be achieved by either group alone.

Once established, the First Czechoslovak Republic was in many respects highly successful until the annexation of the Sudetenland by Nazi Germany in 1938, achieving a high level of industrial development and a level of

democracy unique to the region. For Czechs, this period constitutes an oft-mythologised "golden age" of independence and democracy that was brought to an end by an external enemy - a common feature of national mythologies (Mock, 2014, p. 101). Even if the reality was not so straightforward, or even perceived as such in modern interpretations – most myths of a "golden age" also acknowledge inequalities within societies that sowed the seeds of its destruction – this period is still affectionately perceived (Mock, 2014, pp. 201-15). Popular culture might also play a part in consolidating this affection, as the period is glamorously portrayed the television series *První republika*[17], a sort of Czech *Downton Abbey*, which continues the Romanticisation of this period, whilst maintaining the memory of conflict between the Czech and German populations (Maxa, 2019). Heimann critiques this "golden age" interpretation on the grounds that that it is a particularly Czech interpretation that excludes the perspectives of Slovaks or other national minorities, such as Ruthenians, Poles, or Hungarians, and relies on a somewhat skewed definition of "democracy". She argues that protection of Czech interests was assured by the fact that "the same five Czech political parties would club together, across the usual Left-Right Political divisions, to keep other nationalities out of government" (2009, p. 50). Nevertheless, the economic prosperity achieved in this period, together with the fact that it succumbed to totalitarianism later than its neighbours, cemented the positive image of the era in the national mythology and the place of its founder and first president, T.G. Masaryk, as a personification of the values of intellectualism, patriotism, and liberal democratic values, as well as earning him the moniker of "Father" of the newly formed Czechoslovak nation.

2.3.6 The Protectorate

The annexation of the Sudetenland and the Second World War was the symbolic end point to this "golden era" of democratic Czechoslovakia. However, such end points can be "arbitrary", as they are often the result of ongoing processes rather than a sudden event, and their significance as symbolic demarcation lines is necessarily applied retrospectively (Mock, 2014, p. 101). The Munich agreement of 1938 was based, in part at least, on the

[17] First Republic.

same principles of national determination (this time for the Sudeten Germans) that had been used to justify the creation of the First Republic, but within Czechoslovakia it was widely seen as a betrayal of the state by the Allies (Heim, 1988). This agreement led to the break-down of the Czechoslovak state into the First Slovak Republic (usually considered a vassal state of Nazi Germany) and Bohemia and Moravia, which became a protectorate of the Reich. The political complexities of the Munich agreement and its consequences are beyond the scope of this study. However, it demands recognition as a moment in which the official identity of the state was altered. It seems reasonable to expect that the experiences of loss of national autonomy and disintegration of the state would have far-reaching consequences, especially in the process of determining belonging to the nation and relations to Others. One obvious consequence of the occupation, which is not unique to the Czechoslovak case, was the decimation of the Jewish population, removing at a stroke a significant ethnic and linguistic demographic. Fawn argues that the disparate experiences of the Second World War shaped the attitudes of the two halves of Czechoslovakia towards each other in the post-war era, with the Slovak efforts at resistance contrasted with a perception of Czech complacence, or the Slovak agreement to support the deportation of Jews as evidence of Slovak fascism (2000, p. 10). These opposing points of view highlight how the selection and interpretation of historical events can feed into convenient representations of the nation or its Other according to the bias or motivations of the interpreter.

2.3.7 The 3rd Republic and Communist Period

The Third Republic (1945-8), arguably witnessed the most significant consequence of the war in terms of national identity: the expulsion/transfer of the three million strong population of Sudeten Germans from post-war Czechoslovakia, as well as that of Hungarians and other ethnic minorities. Initially carried out *ad hoc* during the *divoký odsun*[18], and formally undertaken from 1946, the removal of ethnic minorities was supported by Winston Churchill as a means of minimising the likelihood of ethnic tensions in post-war Czechoslovakia (Fawn, 2000, p. 10). Controversial to this day, it serves

[18] "wild transfer".

as an illustration of how identification of a group according to nationality can lead to grave injustice inflicted upon its individual members. The controversy around this episode centres around the fact that it was framed by some in terms of redressing historical injustices perpetrated by Germans towards the Czech speaking population (Sayer, 1998, p. 240-1), yet the forcible expulsion of civilians from their homes disrupts the notion of the Czechs as the perennial victims in their relations with Germany. These events also significantly impacted on the education system, as the once "highly developed" system of German language schools was dismantled at this point (Čaněk, 2001, p. 82), which raises the interesting question of whether having parallel school systems in different languages inevitably leads to divided societies.

The rise of the Communist Party to power in 1948, which is referred to as "Victorious February" or the "February Coup" by pro- and anti- communists respectively, shaped the formal relations of Czechoslovakia with its neighbours for the next forty-one years (Heimann, 2009, p. 150). In political and economic matters, Czechoslovakia by-and-large imitated the policies of the Soviet Union up until the reforms of the Prague Spring (Fawn, 2000, p. 14), but although at this time it was effectively a vassal state of the USSR, a sort of nationalism was even encouraged in the recently reunified Czechoslovakia. Although allowing nationalism to thrive appears at odds with the goals of socialist internationalism, it is mirrored by an early aspect of the Soviet Nationalities Policy, *korenizatsiya*[19], i.e. placing roots of a strong ethnic identity as a primary "building block" of a strong socialist identity. Activities associated with traditional culture, such as folk dancing, were encouraged by the state through funding for local organisations engaged in such activities (Smith, 2001, p. 66). However, such encouragement created an opportunity for manipulation of their meaning by the state (Lane, 1981). Heimann points out that "Schoolchildren were taught Soviet, as well as Czech and Slovak, socialist anthems, and brought up on inspiring tales of socialist achievement" (2009, p. 212), presumably to further identification with the ideals of the Soviet Union in addition to their ethnic or national identities.

In post-war Czechoslovakia, the Czech and Slovak constituents of Czechoslovakia did not enjoy parity in the distribution of power. Like during the interwar years, Czech domination and Prague-centred politics minimised

[19] "Indigenisation".

the role of the *Komunistická strana Slovenska* [KSS][20], which "had no other function than to implement policy as previously worked out by the KSČ[21]" (Heimann, 2009, p. 214). In addition, there was significant migration from Slovakia of workers moving to jobs in the more industrialised regions of Bohemia and Moravia, which included a large number of Slovak Roma, tipping the balance of the population further towards the Czech side.

When Alexander Dubček became first secretary of the KSČ, he implemented reforms that freed the media from censorship and opened the way for discussion of the recent past (Fawn 2000, p. 19). This period (and the man) became associated with the phrase "*Socialismus s lidskou tváří"*[22]*.* His Action Programme sought to emphasise the uniqueness of the "Czechoslovak Road to Socialism" (the title of one of its chapters) and equalise the status of Slovakia with the Czech lands (Bohemia and Moravia) through federalisation (Czechoslvak Communist Party, 1968). These reforms could be seen as an attempt to assert a different kind of identity than that which was being imposed by the main external "Other", the USSR. However, the interpretation of these reforms – especially in the Western media - as a grassroots movement by Czechs and Slovaks to return to their democratic roots is criticised by Heimann, who points out that could be used by people on either end of the political spectrum to justify their positions (2009, p. 212).

When the Warsaw Pact nations invaded Czechoslovakia in response to losing control of the media and population during the Prague Spring, the USSR took over the role of the aggressive Other that had previously belonged to Germany, and left a legacy of anti-communist sentiment, whilst at the same time paving the way for widespread acceptance of Soviet domination in Czechoslovakia (Fawn, 2000, p. 21). This acceptance was not universal, however, and some protest movements (particularly among intellectual elites) took place in the later communist period, such as the Charter 77 movement[23]. However, opposition to communist rule was less widespread and less

[20] Slovak Communist Party.
[21] Komunistická strana Československa (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).
[22] "Socialism with a human face".
[23] An informal protest movement started partially in response to the arrest of the band *The Plastic People of the Universe.* It was named after a document that criticized the government's human rights abuses, which was signed by a number of prominent figures, including the man who later became president, Václav Havel.

organised than that of neighbouring countries, especially when compared with Solidarity in Poland.

Opposition movements against communist rule in the 1980s were often steeped in national symbolism. While in Poland it was symbols of the Catholic church that dominated (Kubik, 1994), in the Czech lands dates and locations of national symbolic significance were more prominent (Holý, 1996, pp. 34-48). Examples include the protests taking place on Wenceslas Square, overlooked by the National Museum, leading to the Old Town Square, which is dominated by a statue of Jan Hus. There was also a difference in character between the Czech and Slovak protests; for example, the Catholic church and its associated symbols played a much greater role in the Slovak Federal Republic (Heimann, 2009, pp. 296-297). The protests that preceded the collapse of communism in Central Europe, particularly the peaceful revolutions in Poland, Czechoslovakia and the "singing revolution" in the Baltic states appeared to demonstrate the power of symbolic action in re-asserting a group identity by re-appropriating "national" symbols and asserting a national identity distinct from that officially propagated by the state. The divergence of the symbols utilized by the Czechs and Slovaks during the Velvet Revolution may have foreshadowed the Velvet Divorce.

2.3.8 The "Transformation" Period

The end of the communist era in Central and Eastern Europe once again prompted change in the official identity of the state. Often framed in terms of a "return to Europe" and a break with the communist past, the peaceful nature of these revolutions in countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Baltic states lent credence to the idea that they were destined to be "normal" (i.e. Western) European countries, but their path of development had been interrupted by the influence of communism and the domination of the region by the USSR, and for this reason "*The civic principle* became one of the leitmotivs in the attempt to re-build the Czech national identity in 1989" (Kubiš, et al., 2003, p. 72). Nonetheless, the ethno-linguistic view of the Czech lands as the home of the "Czech people" (usually taken to mean white speakers of the Czech language) persisted, perhaps due to hostility to criticism of the popular historical narrative which corroborates the ethnic conception of the nation (ibid.). The (at least superficial) predominance of the civic principle in

European Union member states meant that a civic approach to belonging was a desirable goal as part of the process of democratization and returning to Europe. However, moving away from the ethnic conception of the nation same time meant further (and unpopular) consideration of identity and belonging, as it would necessitate an expansion of the definition of who belongs to the nation beyond the popularly conceived ethno-linguistic boundary. Questioning the popular narrative of the Czech past by outsiders may have been particularly unwelcome from Western Europe, given that part of that narrative involves betrayal by the West in failing to protect the nation from Nazism and Soviet Communism (Heim, 1988).

The early post-communist period is also associated with a resurgence of nationalist tendencies throughout the post-communist region, from the former Yugoslavia, where national and ethnic divides were played out in armed conflict, to the Baltic States, where ethnic Russians found themselves disenfranchised in what had formerly been a part of their homeland, the Soviet Union (Brubaker, 1996). For Czechoslovakia, the changes required for the institution of a democratic political system and a market economy exposed irreconcilable differences between the Czech and Slovak federal republics:

> “While the Czech republic was trying to work out how to best leave behind the communist past, embrace the free market, and 'return' to what it liked to think of as its natural European home, in the Slovak Republic there was anxiety about what the removal of state support might mean and as much interest in regulating relations between the two federal republics as in making the 'transition' to a post-Communist society.” (Heimann, 2009, p. 309)

The ensuing disputes over the name of the post-communist state and the form of the new constitutions took place amid a tense atmosphere dominated by a sense of Czech superiority such that “President Havel pleaded with the Czechs to put aside their condescending attitude towards the Slovaks and appealed to the Slovaks to avoid nationalist demagoguery” (Heimann, 2009, p. 319). The subsequent political impasse resulted in the peaceful break-up of the state in 1992.

The “Velvet Divorce”, as it came to be known, took place without a referendum. Despite the fact that around sixty percent of both nations were against the separation, it nevertheless cemented and institutionalised differences between what had been the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics.

It altered the dynamic of Czech-Slovak relations as each part moved from being an internal to an external Other. The establishment of formal borders between the countries, separate currencies and divergent foreign policies helped to formalise perceived distinctions in identity (Fawn, 2000, pp. 139-40). In the early 1990s, Czech nationalism, that is "awareness of a separate Czech identity, the deep-rooted conviction of the existence of Czech nation, and an explicit or tacit identification with it . . . tended to be overshadowed by the manifest Slovak nationalism" (Holý, 1996, p. 7). Holý argues that this is due to the fact that Czech nationalism was the "nationalism of a dominant nation" (1996, p. 7) - in other words, Czech nationalism could be cast as "patriotism", whilst attempts to assert identity on the part of Slovaks could be branded "nationalist", as the dominant group has the privilege of defining the parameters of expressions of distinction.

2.3.9 EU Accession

Accession to the European Union in 2004 for the A8 countries was formally, institutionally, and symbolically, the awaited "return to Europe". Yet contrary to expectations, accession was accompanied by a resurgence in nationalistic sentiment in many of these countries, where EU accession also provoked fears over a loss of sovereignty and identity (Fox and Vermeersch, 2010). In the Czech Republic, this was exemplified by the contrastive discourses of Václav Havel and Václav Klaus, who acted as symbolic representatives of the wider nation in their role as president. Their opposite stances towards the EU see it either as the natural home of the Czech people (Havel) or a supra-national, undemocratic, threatening entity in the mould of the USSR or the Habsburg Empire (Klaus). Whilst the EU itself represents a significant Other in itself, accession to the EU also prompted re-negotiation of relationships with neighbouring countries, as the accession process encouraged co-operation between potential member states (Langhammerová, 2002). However, an unintended consequence of this process, together with the simultaneous accession of the A8 member states, was to encourage the view from the current members' perspectives that these states constituted a group that was on at least some level homogeneous, conforming to the traditional conception of "Central Europe" as a "bridge between West and East" (Langhammerová, 2002, pp. 3-4). In this way, the Czech Republic and other countries of Central

and Eastern Europe became the object of a process of Othering by their more economically secure and powerful neighbours.

2.3.10 Czech Identity on the Global Stage

One of the most important elements of a nation's establishment is that of external recognition by other established nations; “sometimes, a state is or is not a state legally because, amongst other things, other states have decided to treat it as such” (Wilde, et al., 2010). In seeking such recognition, would-be nation states offer themselves up to the gaze of other nations that are powerful enough to grant or withhold politically meaningful recognition. This places newer states (like the Czech Republic in the 1990s) in a position of weakness in comparison to their more established counterparts, as they set out to prove their viability.

In *Inventing Eastern Europe,* Wolff presents the idea that the modern concept of Eastern Europe is an invention of the West, as a counterpoint to the “civilisation” of the Enlightenment. He points out that during the Renaissance, the division of Europe was North/South, with Italy the undisputed centre of culture and learning, but during the Enlightenment the important centres of the movement were in what is now Western Europe. Around this time, Western Europe “appropriated to itself the new notion of “Civilisation” . . . and civilisation discovered its complement, within the same continent, in shadowed lands of backwardness, even barbarism. Such was the invention of Eastern Europe” (Wolff, 1994, p. 2). As a Slavic people and a part of the Habsburg Empire, Czechs fell, in the popular imagination, behind this dividing line: “One of the most obvious ironies of the division of Europe is the fact that Prague, as any map of Europe will show, lies to the northwest of Vienna but is nevertheless regarded as one of the capitals of Eastern Europe.” (Wolff, 1994, p. 106). Such was the identity imposed on Czechs from the outside, even before the establishment of the Czechoslovak state.

With the establishment of the First Republic at the end of WWI, the “Great Czech Nation” did not have long to establish itself in the consciousness of the occident. Neville Chamberlain famously dismissing it in 1938 as “a faraway country” and a “people of whom we know nothing” (Chamberlain, 1938) seems to confirm this. The end of WWII brought little improvement to the perception of Czechoslovakia on the international scene; in 1946, Churchill

declared that “an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent”, referring to the authoritarian communist regimes in place across Central and Eastern Europe. The accession of the KSČ (Czechoslovak Communist Party) to power in 1948 ensured that Czechoslovakia's place was behind that curtain. Wolff argues that this was simply a continuation of Western Europe's now long-established train of thought that goes back to the Enlightenment, which says that Eastern Europe is something “Other”, and of little concern to Western Europe. The forceful metaphor of this imaginary boundary had the effect of “darkening the lands behind the Iron Curtain . . . it was possible not to look closely [at what was going on behind the Iron Curtain], permitted even to look away – for who could see through an Iron Curtain and discern the shapes enveloped in shadow?” (Wolff, 1996, p. 1) Thus the geographical and psychological boundary drawn in the eighteenth century was effectively reinforced throughout the post-war period at least until the fall of communism in the late 1980s and early 90s.

The transformation period brought a new opportunity for post-Soviet states and the former Soviet satellite states to re-cast themselves in the popular imaginations of the West. In the Czech Republic, one of the key elements of this re-branding was to shake off the stigma of being part of Eastern Europe by becoming once more part of Central Europe. Although the concept of Central Europe had served as a dividing line between antagonists in the Cold War, if it was subject to attention from the West (as in Hungary in '56, or Czechoslovakia in '68), it was simply as a diplomatic pawn in the battle between the USA and the USSR (Judt, 1990). This partly explains the perceived need of all the former Satellites of the USSR to either forge a strong, independent national identity or risk being subsumed into an unfavourable “Eastern European” collective identity. This might have been especially the case for the Czechs, for whom the transformation period was accompanied by a loss of territory, and for whom re-appropriating the concept of Central Europe emphasised belonging in the heart of Europe (Fox and Vermeersch, 2010; Cakl, 2005).

2.4 Summary

This section of the literature review has outlined some of the most prominent ways of thinking about the establishment of nations and belonging. It has

shown how the formation of a collective identity is very often predicated on the exclusion or denigration of an Other, but that criteria for belonging are often nebulous. It went on to describe some key events in Czech history and considered how these might have impacted on relations with significant national Others. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will examine the two-way interaction of these historical events and education, before the empirical section examines the mechanisms of this interaction.

Chapter 3 Literature Review (ii): Nation-building and Education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between the development of Czech national consciousness and the development of the education system until the early twenty-first century. Chapter 3.2 begins with a general discussion of mass education and nation-building, which looks at how modern education systems and nations appear to have developed contiguously. It begins by discussing the proposal put forward by Gellner that they were a necessary by-product of industrialising economies, but also looks at some of the problems with this argument and considers that more deliberate state-building ideologies might have been involved. The following section, Chapter 3.2.1, briefly discusses the legacy of the famous Czech thinker and pedagogue Jan Ámos Komenský and how his thinking, ideas, and image have been deployed at different times as the Czech education system has evolved. Chapter 3.2.2 describes the development of schooling in the Czech lands from the eighteenth century until the First Republic of Czechoslovakia, whilst Chapters 3.2.3 to 3.2.7 examine the education system during the communist period and how the ideology that pervaded schooling at that time has impacted on the school system since the transformation period. The period of post-communist transformation until the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union is discussed in chapter 3.3. As accession to the EU brought a multicultural agenda to the forefront of Czech education, the education of Roma (the largest and most disadvantaged minority in the Czech Republic) is discussed in Chapter 3.4. The section concludes with a summary and some reflections on the relationship between the development of the education system in the Czech Republic and a collective national consciousness in Chapter 3.5.

3.2 Mass Education and Nation Building

Modernist (and to some extent ethno-symbolist) theories of nation building support the notion that national education systems have been, and continue to be, central to modern nations. If the ability to recognise oneself as part of a nation depends on a process of communication between members, then it makes sense for the state to foster institutions that ensure that this

communication takes place even in the face of rapid social, political or economic changes. Mass education emerged as an ideal mechanism for this function. It not only promoted literacy among the population, but also provided "a space for the spread of nationally relevant information to the masses" and acted as "an instrument of social discipline and moral education, serving in the interests of state integration" (Hroch, 2006, p. 40).

Gellner argues that, having emerged at the beginnings of the industrial era to provide an adaptable workforce with a broad skill-base, "the principle of universal and centrally guaranteed education . . . is an ideal more honoured in the observance than in the breach." (1983, p. 28) and in this respect is, in comparison to other rights that are constitutionally guaranteed, highly unusual. He concludes, that "the kind of education described – universal, standardized, and generic - *really* plays some essential part in the effective working of a modern society" by facilitating its reproduction (ibid.). This reproduction may be carried out through mass media, family traditions, national celebrations etc., but (in most cases) none of these are both a legal right and obligation - unlike compulsory education to a given age. Therefore, a national, free, and compulsory school system is the most assured mode of societal "reproduction". It is, according to Gellner, the indoctrination experienced within such systems that makes people so willing to identify with and even die for such an abstract notion as their "nation".

However, the correlation between modern industrial nations and their education systems is perhaps more complicated than Gellner suggests. For example, Smith (1996), points out that the members of the early national movements (in the Czech case the National Revival), could not have been a product of such a system where none was in place. Gellner counters this charge of functionalism on the grounds that nationalism is as much of emotional importance as social or economic, as "individuals find themselves in very stressful situations, unless the nationalist requirement of congruence between a man's culture and that of its environment is satisfied" (Gellner, 1996, p. 626), but this rebuttal fails to explain why group identities coalesced around specifically "nationalist" lines when such "incongruence" arose between culture and environment. It also fails to account for the fact that many of the Czech revivalists spoke German as their main language - the historian and "father of the nation" Palacký even published the early volumes of his

History of the Czech Nation in German! The "uneven" development of European education systems is further evidence that the implementation of mass education systems is part of a complex process "that can only be understood in relation to the process of state formation … which gives due weight to both political forms and their economic and social conditions of existence" (Green, 2009, p. 83). So, although the requirement for a literate workforce may have been a significant impetus in the development of state education, forces also operated to shape their form and content – such as increased bureaucratic centralization, and "also the formation of ideologies and collective beliefs which legitimate state power and underpin concepts of nationhood and national 'character'" (ibid.) This is not to say that the origins of modern nationalism rest with the emergence of a state school system, yet the function of schooling in state formation and the consolidation of national identity is widely acknowledged. As Hroch points out:

> "Literacy was not the only task of elementary schools. During the nineteenth century, the central role of religious education was, as a result of political modernization, replaced by civic education and political disciplination . . . intrinsic to this programme was the education of the young in displaying love for their fatherland, which was usually understood as the state. All pupils (and, analogically, also all soldiers) were educated according to state patriotism." (2006, p. 29).

Educating a nation according to the principles of state-patriotism necessarily involves a level of agreement within the state as to what should constitute this patriotism and how it should be disseminated, thus an "official" national identity may be formed through this civic education. However, what this identity should look like may be seen very differently by different sections of the population (Brubaker, 1992), and therefore it may be the social, cultural, and economic elites who have the most influence over what this identity should look like (Bourdieu, 2010). A top-down model, however, is no guarantee that the officially propagated ideologies will take root if they do not achieve a level of congruence with the narratives on which peoples' pre-existing identities are based.

Billig also recognises that a level of homogeneity was required by modern nation-states in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, asserting that "One of the essential characteristics of modernity was vital to

state making: the intolerance of difference" (1995, p. 30). He points to the role of education systems in producing the required homogeneity, stating that "Citizens, with their way of thinking moulded by a common education, would use the same currency, travel on the state's highways and be expected to show unequivocal loyalty to the nation" (ibid.). This combination of cultural coherence and practical convenience explains the durability of nationality as a group identity, but not its emergence nor the apparent desire for homogeneity. Although the homogenous ideal has in many ways softened over time, making room for a more civic-based approach in which difference is at least tolerated (for example in post WWII Western Europe), its impact can still be seen and felt, and is clearly problematic in heterogeneous societies. Even in the case of the ethnically and linguistically homogenous Czech Republic, there are nonetheless significant minority populations (mainly Roma) who still suffer as a result of a homogenous conception of the nation.

The intentional use of mass education in the process of nation-building is in many cases explicit to the extent that it seems natural. For example, in the United States where "...the educational system was transformed into a machine for political socialisation by such devices as the worship of the American flag..." (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, 2012, p. 208) and "The socialisation of students in a set of common values and beliefs about their homeland has long been the central *raison d'être* of education" (Hardwick, et al., 2010, p. 253). Here, the means and the end are both explicit and clearly identifiable. However, in European contexts, where there is no special daily ritual to bind the young citizen to the nation, other components of the school system play a subtler, but arguably more significant role. Hardwick et.al. (2010) argue that civics education is the primary vehicle for creating citizens who share a common national identity; on the other hand, Hornát (2019) emphasises the importance of the content of history textbooks in serving as a foundation for national identity and perceptions of significant Others, whilst the personal beliefs and views of individual teachers is stressed by Korostelina (2013). It certainly appears that school provides a unique environment in which ritual, controlled access to the past, and the exertion of pedagogical power can combine to inculcate a set of values and beliefs about the nation and who belongs to it. However, the *interactions* between all of these factors, which may all be equally important in their own way, are under-researched and are the focus of the present study.

The political and institutional constraints within which schools must operate are also significant. For example, the language of instruction is important in the process of nation-building and creating national in-groups and out-groups. Galbreath (2005) describes how this was undertaken in two of the Baltic states (Latvia and Estonia) during the 1990s. Here, the Russian speaking population went from being a linguistic majority in a superpower state to a linguistic minority in a tiny country. At the level of policy, the Latvian and Estonian governments set targets for all state-funded education to be undertaken in the titular language by a certain date. This meant that the Russian-speaking population (the most significant national minority group in both countries) would no longer have access to Russian language education, which had been available throughout the Soviet period. This had the effect of creating a newly dominant national in-group, whilst potentially disenfranchising the Russian speaking population[24]. This example demonstrates one of the potential problems of having national identity propagated through official channels, namely, that as a social narrative, it is underpinned by "binary symbolic codes that are composed of a positive and negative value" (Korostelina, 2013) which in the case of national identity is composed of "belonging to the nation" and "not belonging to the nation" or "us" and "them".

In instances of rapid political change such as the early transformation period in Central and Eastern Europe, nationalist narratives are often reinforced just as they need to be softened as:

> "It is through nationalism that societies try to propel themselves forward to certain kinds of goals (industrialisation, prosperity, equality with other peoples etc.) by a certain sort of regression – by looking inwards, drawing more deeply upon their indigenous resources, resurrecting past folk heroes and myths about themselves and so on" (Nairn, 1982, p. 348).

This seems to have been the case in the Czech Republic, as historic symbols were revived and repurposed during anti-communist protests (Holý, 1996). Given this tendency, it is likely that even when supported by policy, changes and adaptations to nation-wide education systems can be difficult to

[24] Latvia, which had the largest Russian speaking population of the three Baltic States, held a referendum in 2012 to make Russian an official language, but this was rejected by 75% of voters (Laven, 2012).

implement and expensive, not to mention politically unprofitable due to the long-term nature of the results. This might prove to be especially so when the proposed changes go against populist discourses, such as those promoting more multi-cultural and inclusive visions of the nation-state which challenge the "homogeneity" that was an earlier characteristic. Nevertheless, education systems do adapt to changing circumstances, and the following sections of this chapter follow the most significant developments in Czech education, exploring their relationship to national identity.

3.2.1 The Legacy of Jan Ámos Komenský (John Ámos Comenius)

The "father of modern education", Jan Ámos Komenský (1592-1670), is a Czech figure of international renown. The Comenius Medal, awarded by UNESCO, honours "outstanding achievements in the fields of education research and innovation" (UNESCOPRESS, 2004), his image appears on the 200 Crown banknote, the Czech Republic celebrates "Teachers' Day" annually on his birthday (March 28th), and in the poll run by *Česká televize* (Czech Television) to find "*největší Čech*"[25], he came in fourth place (Česká televize, 2014). All of this suggests that he has an important place in the national culture. However, establishing Komenský's legacy and the influence of his thinking on Czech education is not easy, as his ideas have been reinterpreted through different lenses in different times. Hábl points out that Czechs love their own vision of Komenský, but that *"Akcenty doby se s dobou mění"*[26] (2010, p. 47), therefore we must be conscious of our own biases when considering his legacy (Piaget, 1993). Štěch notes that "*Dávno před vznikem pedegogiky jako samostatné disciplíny, dokázal vnímat, pojmenovat (a později systematicky pojednat) klíčová témata oboru, která se ukazují jako stále aktualní"*[27] (2017, pp. 36-37).

Komenský's philosophical thinking was pansophic, in that he sought to develop a unified philosophy and didactic method that would make it possible to teach "all things to all men, and indeed of teaching them with certainty, so that the result cannot fail to follow" (Comenius, 1896, p. 157). He believed in

[25] The "greatest Czech" of all time.
[26] "The emphasis of the time changes with the times".
[27] "Long before the emergence of pedagogy as a stand-alone discipline, he was able to perceive, name (and later systematically deal with) the key topics of that discipline, which prove to be up-to-date."

the possibility of universal harmony and was optimistic about the capacity of education to help humankind to achieve such a utopian ideal (Hábl, 2010). He believed that “all the knowledge and all the scientific achievements belong to all people and all nations, and that everybody should be enabled to get to know them”, and in this way people would be empowered to free themselves of destructive “nationalism and chauvinism” (Mirko and Munjiza, 2013, p. 34).

In his *Great Didactic*, Komenský outlined his main ideas about how education should best be administered to engage the pupil and achieve the desired outcomes. Some of these ideas still sound progressive even today, and whilst Piaget cautions against trying “to find in him the origins of contemporary or recent trends of thought” (1967, p. 1), his thinking has echoes in various aspects of modern education - from stages in schooling, through methods of instruction, to concept-based learning. Komenský was critical of the schools of his day and set out to discover “the diseases and their causes” that made it possible for someone to spend a long time in education without becoming truly well-versed in what they had studied. He identifies these as: a lack of clear objectives and guidance about how to attain said objectives; the fact that “things that should naturally be associated together are kept apart” (Comenius, 1967, p. 68) – a particular problem in the sciences - was that methodologies varied too much between institutions and teachers so that students were unclear about *how* to learn. These problems sound very familiar to teachers even today, as do the solutions proposed by Komenský in his *Didactic*, such as the setting of clear learning objectives and teaching students skills for learning alongside content, and the use of learning materials appropriate to pupils’ age and stage of learning. He believed that books should be designed to engage students and maximise their benefits (Štěch, 2017, p. 36), and put this idea into practice with his *Orbis Pictus* (Visible World) of 1658, a major influence in the development of the modern illustrated textbook.

Another example of Komenský’s thinking reflected in modern educational trends is the idea that education should not only be systematic, but that is should also be holistic, teaching “all things to all men” (Comenius, 1896, p. 157). He argues that false distinctions should not be made between subjects and topics which are linked, and idea that resonates with the modern approach of inquiry-based learning, which frames contextualises content and

skills within broader generalisations and principles applicable in life (Erickson, 2012, p. 3). This has implications for how schools traditionally divide learning by subject, which creates symbolic divisions that, once established, are difficult to overcome.

Perhaps the most consequential of Komenský's ideas for modern education is the idea that it should be free and universal – in his *Pampaedia*[28] he advocates the education of "all men about all things in all ways" (Comenius, 1967, p. 116), including those who have disabilities which may have been presumed to exclude them from learning:

> "It may be asked whether the blind, the deaf, and the dull-witted, whose organic defect prevents them from being able to receive knowledge fully, should be admitted to education… Nay, all the more, since they have greater need of external help, for nature on account of their internal defect can help them so much the less." (Comenius, 1967, p. 138).

In short, Komenský believed in the educability of all people and peoples, and that no-one should be excluded from education on the basis of wealth, gender or religion (Králová, 2014). He envisioned that all pupils be educated together in public schools, the establishment of which should be a priority for even the smallest of settlements (Comenius, 1967, p. 189). That the right to education is now enshrined as a fundamental human right, is perhaps Komenský's greatest legacy, but the fact that access to education is still not a given for many shows how that resistance to such thinking is still prevalent.

It is true Komenský's ideas appear extremely progressive for his era; the idea of universal, free education was not adopted until long after his death. However, this raises the question that, if Komenský's ideas are so attractive now, why were they not more influential earlier in the development of education, in the Czech lands and abroad? One possible answer is that his thinking was simply ahead of its time. His philosophical pansophism has been described as "too vague and too grandiose for the mental outlook of the 17th century" (Sadler, 2019). It could be argued that his educational ideas, bound

[28] *'Pampaedia'* is the common English translation of Komenský's '*De rerum humanarum…Pt 4'* , first published in 1666.

up with his pansophism as they were, also simply too different from the dominant practices and thinking of his time to be widely adopted. However, this does not explain his renown either during his lifetime or afterwards.

An alternative answer lies in the symbolic representation of Komenský's image and ideas, of which "*Některé aspekty byly upřednostňovány, jiné naopak opomíjeny, podle toho, co bylo v dané době považováno za aktuální či relevantní"*[29] (Hábl, 2010), making his true legacy difficult to discern (Sadler, 2019). An example of this is how during the communist period, the party leaders sought to associate themselves with Komenský's image and ideas to establish their own position in relation to great "national" figures. A prepared speech delivered in 1970 to an audience of international scientists in Prague referred to his goals of global peace, and the state even donated a statue of Komenský to the Dutch city of Naarden, where he died (Goedhart, 2017). A further example, from the early post-communist era, was the establishment of the Commenius medal by the Czech ministry of Education in 1992. This may have been an effort to re-appropriate the name of Komenský for the new regime, and promote the idea that the Czech nation is committed to international educational development - laureates have included those working on educational projects in Lithuania, Pakistan, Chile, and Haiti among others (UNESCOPRESS, 2004). That the authors of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] saw fit to quote his *Pampaedia*[30] at the outset of their vision for the Czech education system in the twenty-first century is another example of this. Although this type of symbolic manipulation may be interpreted as cynical, it may also reflect a genuine universality in Komenský's thinking that people of apparently opposing ideological persuasions have found something of value in his ideas.

Komenský's thinking has often been more influential abroad than in the Czech Lands – perhaps because of the myriad other influences that the Czech education system was subjected to, such as the Austro-Hungarian system and communism. His child-centred approach to teaching, and his vision of education as a unifying force in society have found their way back to the Czech lands (often via Western NGOs or the influence of organisations such the OECD or the European Union) but they are still in the process of becoming

[29] "Some aspects of his work were emphasized, some neglected, depending on what was considered to be up-to-date or relevant".
[30]

embedded. A view of education as a means to an end (i.e. economic participation) persists (Štěch, 2017, p. 209), which threatens the capacity of his ideas to take root, and may result in policy makers again manipulating the symbolic value of Komesnký by cherry-picking from his ideas to suit a particular agenda. But perhaps the malleability of the Czechs' "own" symbolic Komenský reflects the fact his key idea – that it is fundamentally possible to shape people through education – is a firmly held belief in the country of his birth, but that no consensus has been reached about what the final product ought to look like.

3.2.2 Czech Schools and Nation-building from the Eighteenth century to the First Republic

Before the First Czechoslovak Republic came into being, its first foundations might have been laid, ironically enough, by the Habsburg emperor Joseph II introducing a policy of universal basic education, which resulted in the number of elementary schools in Bohemia more than doubling in the period from 1779-91, and more than a threefold increase in school attendance in the same period (Havránek, 1967, p. 233). This policy reflected the need for at least a functionally literate populace able to take part in the more industrialised economy that was emerging around this time, but was also part of an attempt to create improvements *"ve státní správě, a tím ve školství"*[31] as well as address the state's responsibility to produce "*při výchově šťastného a užitečného občana v moderní společnosti"*[32] (Fasnerová, 2009, p. 14). This suggests that Komenský's faith in the power of education as a civilising force was beginning to have some influence, but perhaps not in the way Komenský might have imagined. Green points out that during this period "As public schools came to predominate over private and voluntary institutions, governments ineluctably increased their influence on education." (2013, p. 12) – serving the interests of the state before Komenský's internationalist vision.

The role of education in a rapidly industrialising economic setting also informed some of the reformist attitudes to education taking place in Western Europe, particularly France, around the same time. There, the idea that "children belong to the state" began to take hold in the latter half of the

[31] "In state affairs, thereby in schooling".
[32] "through education happy and useful citizens in modern society".

eighteenth century (Gill, 2010, p. 242). Whilst some promoted the equalising powers of public education, this was tempered by fears of the consequences of too much education in a socially unequal society: “The good of society dictates that people's knowledge not extend beyond their occupation. Any man who sees beyond his miserable trade will never practice it with fortitude and patience” (La Chalotais, 1763, cited in Gill, 2010, p. 243); people with wider knowledge of the lives of Others (in this case, the better off) would be able to compare their lot and find grounds for dissatisfaction. After the progressive introduction of elementary schools for all children in Bohemia, the same fears also emerged there. The eventual consequence of this was the 1805 Act (*Die politische Schulverfassung*), which “stressed that schools had to make pupils contented with their social status and not make them dissatisfied through education. The amount of approved knowledge and skills was limited to what was written in the *Methodenbuch* and the teachers were not allowed to teach more” (Parízek, 1992, p. 74). The idea that that an educated population is a danger to social stability justified political control of mass education, setting a precedent for access to knowledge being controlled and overseen by the state to suit its own needs.

Havránek points out another (related) problematic aspect of educating the Czech population, namely that their state allocated allowance of education would still not allow them to advance in society “Since the Czech people could be educated only in their own language, the deliberate fostering of the monolingual German character of the administration and trade, even to the point that a knowledge of German was demanded of artisans who wished to obtain a master's diploma, did much to stir up a Czech national revival” (Havránek, 1967, p. 233). This position is supported by Suda, who points out that “German was adopted by all Czech classes above the peasantry, since its command was the condition for social advancement” (2001, p. 233). Early Czech education, therefore had the potential to increase the social distance between the Czech and German speakers by promoting literacy in Czech only.

If an educated population unable to further its position in society using their native language in a professional or even social context created fertile soil for the seeds of a national movement to take root, state education formed part of the environment which helped it to flourish in the nineteenth century, the 1805 Act notwithstanding:

> “Among the first generation of Czech partisans were many people who went to German schools and even members of German families who spoke German more fluently than Czech, but who educated their children in Czech. Although more people were changing their nationality to that of the ruling nation, the power of public opinion made this process almost impossible in the cities and towns dominated by Czech social and cultural life. After the beginning of the 1860's Bohemian patriotism was completely replaced by Czech nationalism as the political program of the bourgeoisie” (Havránek, 1967, p. 236)

This at least partially supports that the idea of being Czech was to some extent a “choice”, as Heimann (2009, p. 14) puts it, but it was one made possible by institutional support, and it could be argued that rather than being an act of Romantic nationalism by the bourgeoisie, it was an act of resistance against total cultural assimilation. An interesting parallel might be the growth in recent years of Gaellic medium education in Scotland, which has been supported by the Scottish government through the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, and has become increasingly popular in Edinburgh and Glasgow – far from the traditional Gaelic speaking regions (O'Reilly, 2016). This support for the Gaelic language, which at one point seemed in danger of becoming a cultural curio, appears to be part of a deliberate fostering of a distinctive Scottish identity, but is difficult to imagine that this was the intention of the Hapsburg elites when establishing Czech medium schools.

As well as the language medium of one's education at least partially determining one's national allegiance, Czech schools created an important platform from which the revivalists' version of history could be promoted. The school is a “crucial device for writing and rewriting national consciousness, and consciousness is constructed out of myths of origin, achievements and destiny.” (Bernstein, 1996: XXIII) in which the rituals and curriculum content (especially in the fields of language, literature and history) are critical to the formation of national consciousness and the “horizontal solidarity” that accompanies it. This may be possible as schools potentially create a space in which compelling narratives of the nation’s past can be disseminated. These narratives, their reproduction, and the values they embody can be transmitted by everyone involved in the educational process from policy makers down to individual classroom teachers. They can therefore be expected to impact on the identity of the younger generations owing to the nature of pedagogical

relationship between teachers and pupils. Teachers, as the authority figures, are in a position of being able to enact “symbolic violence” within this context, meaning they are empowered to “*to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force*” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 4). The legitimacy of official narratives is communicated in the classroom, and is therefore difficult to challenge.

The narrative of Czech history conveyed in the nineteenth century was, according to Suda, “a skewed picture of what had really happened to their country during and immediately after the Thirty Years’ War. This picture, unfortunately, gained considerable credence in wide circles of the Czech public, since it was peddled by popular press and literature as well as by many teachers at the institutions of education of all grades.” (2001, p. 5). This picture of history, supported by Palacký's *History of the Czech Nation*, was focused on tracing the history of the Czech nation back to the Crown of St. Wenceslas, emphasising the nation's Protestant and reformist credentials as personified by Jan Hus, and cast *Bílá Hora* (the Battle of White Mountain) as the great national defeat that led to centuries of subjugation under the Catholic, German speaking Habsburgs. The success of this narrative added legitimacy to the idea of a Czech nation – one which had at least the right to a degree of political autonomy within Austria-Hungary – and strengthened what became the Czechoslovak claim to independence during the First World War.

The First Czechoslovak Republic, like its imperial predecessor, was an ethnically diverse state, made up of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Jews, Roma, Russians, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Ruthenians. As mentioned previously, this period is often Romanticised as a “golden age” of Czechoslovak democracy. Education has a central role to play in a democracy - Bernstein points to three “rights” that must be realised and available to all participants in a just democratic education system: enhancement, inclusion, and participation. Enhancement “is the right to the means of critical understanding and new possibilities”; inclusion is “is the right to be included, socially, intellectually, culturally and personally”. However, Bernstein also stresses that “inclusion” does not equal absorption or assimilation, stating that “the right to be included may also require a right to be separate, autonomous”; participation refers to “the right to participate in procedures whereby order is created, maintained and changed” (2000: XXIII). If these rights are unequally distributed among participants, then the school and education system become

a means of entrenching societal inequalities. According to Fawn, the First Republic "made provision for its ethnic diversity, with extensive legal and political provisions for its minorities, which were particularly enshrined in the Bill of Rights" (2000, p. 4). In terms of education, this meant that mother tongue education was available for most of Slovaks, Germans, and Hungarians, at least. Minorities were also permitted to conduct official government business in their own language "in areas where they comprised at least a fifth of the population" (ibid.). However, Czechs did not only group along ethnic lines to dominate the political scene, but began to dominate education throughout the new Czechoslovak state, as whilst Slovak medium education was available to most of those who wanted it, "the comprehensive education system in Slovakia, [was] often run by Czechs sent to redress the region's dearth of teachers" (ibid.), leading Slovaks to sense that "they were deprived of autonomy in the centralized state, particularly as they saw the central government, as well as their own local offices, overwhelmingly staffed by Czechs" (ibid.). The lack of true inclusion that enabled all citizens of the Czechoslovak state to "participate in procedures whereby order is created, maintained and changed" on equal terms, but instead be dominated by one ethnic group somewhat undermines the "golden era" interpretation of this period of Czechoslovak history, democracy, and education. However, the Second World War and its aftermath saw a complete dismantling of the multi-ethnic state and its education system, which was only partially re-established under communist rule.

3.2.3 Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Influence

To understand the Czech education system after 1989, it is necessary to understand the development of the education system under communism. During this time, the institutions (and possibly the attitudes) that continue to shape it were established during this period. The faith placed in educational systems as a vehicle for social change and the promotion of a national identity was perhaps never so keenly demonstrated as in the USSR. There, the focus on providing education in national languages was a key component of the Soviet Nationalities Policy in its early stages, followed by the introduction of Russian language instruction as a compulsory subject in all schools in 1938 (either as the main medium of instruction or as an additional language). Smith

traces the relationship between language education policy, practice and identity from Tsarist Russia where “linguistic Russification was one of the prime objectives of the nationality policy” (2001, p. 55), through the early years of the USSR and the Nationalities Policy, during which “the creation of national schools was an essential step towards the Sovietisation of the non-Russians” (ibid., p. 57), to the final years of the USSR. Across this whole period:

> The content of education, which was permeated with ritual, presented young people with the preferred behaviour patterns of the young patriot and internationalist in a personalised manner, emphasising the young person's local, ethnic, regional, and republic identity as building blocks toward the desired goal of Soviet patriotism. (Smith, 2001, p. 66)

However personalised the component, though, the form and content of Soviet or Soviet-style education was the formation of a strong *collective* identity. As King observes “Almost every school in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia … contains many slogans describing education's purpose as the building up of a communist man in a communist world” (King, 1963, p. 3).

Although it lay outside of the Soviet Union, schools in Czechoslovakia closely resembled their Soviet counterparts in many respects – as Mitter points out: “Since the end of the forties educational policies in most East European countries were oriented towards the 'Soviet model'” (1992, p. 16). He cites Czechoslovakia as an example of a state whose education system imitated the Soviet model, in spite of the fact that it represented “retrograde development” (Mitter, 1992, pp. 17-18) in the sense that it became less “progressive” (i.e. focused on the needs of the individual student) and instead favoured a uniform approach and a hierarchical mode of instruction and organisation. Within such a system, a great deal of the responsibility for imbuing the nation's youth with patriotic and socialist values is conferred upon the teacher, as illustrated by Mejstřík :

> The importance of the teaching profession and of teachers as the bearers of the nation's education is demonstrated through the life of and spelt out in the writings of J. A. Komenský. The objectives and tasks for the upbringing of the future proletarian youth was set out by K. Marx in the Inaugural Address to the First International in 1864 (1975, p. 5).

Invoking the “national” figure of Komenský alongside Marx can be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that the goals of socialism and the goals of the

nation need not be in conflict, and that a strong Czech or Czechoslovak identity is indeed a “building block” of the identity of the international socialist.

Like in other satellite states of the USSR, Russian language became a compulsory subject of study in Czechoslovak schools. This “official precedence of the Russian language”, was initially “assisted and welcomed by adherents of the pan-Slavic ideas of the past” (Anweiler, 1992, p. 30). Nevertheless, the limitations of building ties between states through compulsory language learning in schools and other curricular content during the communist era is raised by both Anweiler and Smith. Anweiler writes that “Historical lessons … are better learned by the people than through cultivation of friendship in textbooks on history and civics” (ibid.), in reference to the Warsaw Pact invasion, which created more anti-Soviet feeling in Czechoslovakia than could be overcome by any amount of lessons showing the USSR in a positive light. Smith, on the other hand, points out that, long after Russian language instruction had been mandatory for students, levels of proficiency in the language among non-Russian citizens of the USSR were still lower than expected. Together with the relative ease with which instruction in the titular languages was introduced in non-Russian former Soviet republics after the break-up of the USSR, this appears to demonstrate his point that “Bureaucratically decreeing a reform in education is a long way from implementing it or providing the trained staff and textbook materials”; resistance to Russification was strongest in rural areas which were more likely to have problems finding staff (Smith, 2001, p. 71). Although he acknowledges a connection between populations' affiliation to national cultures and the failure of policies of Russification, Smith does not imply that nationalism is the sole cause of this opposition. He suggests rather that there was “a resistance to change and adherence to tradition” (ibid.) which could not be overcome in the classroom, at least not without staff who were fully indoctrinated into and committed to the ideals of the Soviet system.

3.2.4 Educational Reform under Communism

The School Act of 1948 nationalised the education system of Czechoslovakia, establishing it on principles of comprehensive education and eradicating the role of religious organisations and the Church (although state funded religious education could be made available to children if their parents demanded it

(King, 1963, p. 3)). It established a nine-year programme of compulsory education for all, paid for by the state. Every aspect of school life had a strong ideological rationale, down to the provision of materials: “The free provision of these supplies has also a significant educational aspect. From an early age boys and girls are taught to have a sense of economy and respect for common property” (Vodinský, 1963, p. 8). This demonstrated how all aspects of education had been considered from an ideological point of view, underlining its perceived importance to society.

Parízek argues that the reforms that took place in this period were undertaken primarily for pragmatic, economic reasons “For example, a shortage of working power led to the shortening of school attendance in 1953 and in another form through reducing general education in favour of vocational training in 1976” (1992, p. 76). It is true that the communist authorities stressed the connection between education and the “practical life” that awaits pupils beyond school (Vodinský, 1963, p. 20). The 1976 reform saw compulsory schooling extended to ten years – eight years of *základní škola* (general basic education) and two of either *střední odborná učiliště* or *střední odborná škola* (vocational) or *gymnázium* (academic, ending with a Maturita qualification) (Eurydice, 2008). This ensured that more pupils received some specialised training for work and reflected a more general conviction that had emerged in the early Soviet period that “only intense, specialised training could produce needed specialists” (Connelly, 2000, p. 22). The final reform under communism came in 1984 and established the structural framework of the system that was to remain in place for the next 20 years. The 1984 Schools Act provided for greater parity between the different types of secondary schools, with *gymnázia* beginning to offer vocational education and vocational schools offering a Maturita. It also “provided for the establishment of the education system as a comprehensive entirety from pre-school to adult education” (Eurydice, 2008) – a move that ensured state control over all aspects of education at all stages.

3.2.5 The Curriculum under Communism – a Snapshot from the 1960s

Vodinský's summary of Czechoslovak education published in 1963 gives a clear idea of the ideological aims of schooling at that time. Even before the emphasis on vocational training in 1976 through mandatory attendance at a

secondary school, “practical training” was considered a key aspect “In bringing school life closer to actual life” and had the fourth most hours devoted to it (after Czech/Slovak language, mathematics and physical education) (1963, p. 23), signalling its perceived importance. This practical training aimed to “enable pupils to acquire the knowledge of the processes, skills and methods of productive work” (ibid.). It began as early as first grade, with “handicrafts”, becoming more like workplace training after the fifth grade. Science teaching, too, was heavily focused on its potential industrial applications (ibid.). Languages and humanities had an even narrower focus. Even Russian language teaching was limited to enabling children “not only to read with proper understanding, but within the limits of the prescribed vocabulary to … express themselves orally and in written form on major aspects of practical life and social work” (Vodinský, 1963, p. 22), echoing the Hapsburg anxiety that too much education could be dangerous to the state. Civics education, aimed to “provide instruction about the most important aspects of political and economic institutions in Czechoslovakia”, familiarise them with “the essentials of the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism”, and of course “bring home to them the fundamental principles of communist morality” (ibid.), making this the most explicitly ideological element of the curriculum. Music education focused on Czech and Slovak composers and music, “including regional and national folk songs” (Vodinský, 1963, p. 24) - again reflecting the aspiration in Soviet education of “emphasising the young person's local, ethnic, regional, and republic identity as building blocks toward the desired goal of Soviet patriotism” (Smith, 2001, p. 66). History too was focused on Czechoslovakia “with particular regard to its cultural development”, whilst Geography was “focused on Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R and other socialist countries; ” (Vodinský, 1963, p. 22). From this it is clear from that, apart from the strong practical elements in the curriculum, education in the arts and social sciences looked both inward, promoting cultural knowledge of the Czechoslovak state, and Eastward, towards the USSR. As the curriculum was uniform and centrally controlled, this can be expected to have been the case in all Czechoslovak schools, through textbooks and by teachers. However, the delivery and emphasis may have varied depending on the ideological commitment of teachers.

The mission of building the “communist man” does not seem to have come at the expense of the promotion of the Czechoslovak patriot (at least prior to 1968). It is telling that Vodinský mentions that:

> … a limit has to be placed in the school curriculum on the historical background; school syllabuses and textbooks are mainly concerned with subject matter of a contemporary nature … Educationists and teachers have a duty to provide pupils with an all-round basic education, while they must avoid overburdening them with an excessively wide range of subject matter (1963, p. 20).

This provides possible justification for the removal of potentially controversial events or figures from the curriculum, reflecting wider examples of “enforced forgetting” and censorship by omission that permeated the communist era (Sayer, 1998, p. 267) and intensified under normalisation after August 1968. By this time, it seems that the needs of the socialist *society* have replaced the concern for the socialist *nation*.

3.2.6 Education of National Minorities in Communist Czechoslovakia

The right to an education in one's mother tongue is an important signifier of national identity and confers legitimacy onto of that identity to those groups (or individuals) to which it is granted. The establishment of Czech-medium schools had been an important feature of the *národní obrození* (National Revival) as well as a source of tensions between Czech and German speakers. As Čaněk points out: “The Czech lands ... have a rich history of inter-ethnic conflicts over schooling, perhaps the most pronounced being that between Czechs and German speakers in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries” (2001, p. 74). As the dominant language group in terms of the official language of the state, German speakers had had the educational and linguistic advantage at this time. The impact of this in the division of society was seen by some as lamentable (Sayer, 2000, p. 60), but the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw this imbalance somewhat redressed as the Czech national movement gained momentum and the Czechoslovak state was established. It was to undergo a complete reversal following WWII. By the time the Communist Party came to power in Czechoslovakia, the minority communities that had existed were so depleted following the Second World War as to be almost insignificant, and the 1948

constitution “stated that Socialist Czechoslovakia was a state of the Czech and Slovak nations, making no reference to minorities” (Čaněk, 2001, p.74). The transfer of the Sudeten Germans “meant an end to the highly developed German-language education system that had existed in inter-war Czechoslovakia” (ibid.). The dismantling of this system meant that the few remaining German speakers were forced to assimilate (Čaněk, 2001, p. 86).

The potential impact of a well-developed system of minority schooling is perhaps best illustrated through comparison of the contrasting treatment of the Polish and Roma minorities under communism. During the 1950s, policies became more “welcoming” towards the Polish community, allowing ethnic Poles to use Polish in communication with the local authorities in the Těšín region on the Polish border. Polish-medium schools were established throughout northern Moravia up to the secondary level, as the communist authorities sought to promote the Polish minority. Despite the widespread demographic assimilation of the Polish population through inter-marriage, most pupils of Polish nationality continued to be educated in Polish, despite the closure of smaller schools in the late 1970s, which led to the closure of many small Polish-medium schools (Jasinský, 1997, pp. 199-202). The official status granted to Polish language and the freedom to use it in official institutions as well as receive a state-funded education through that medium did not prevent the integration of the Polish community but may have mitigated a potential source of conflict.

On the other hand, the Roma population of the Czech lands, mainly composed of immigrants from Slovakia, was not granted official minority status on the grounds that according to the central committee of the communist party “Roma were not a national minority and could not become one” (Čaněk, 2001, p. 87) and was therefore subject to an official policy of assimilation. According to Čaněk, from the earliest post-war period, the common strategy for the education of Roma children with poor Czech language skills or little to no prior education was to place them in “schools for pupils with intellectual deficiencies”, a practice criticised as discriminatory by some teachers even then, on the grounds that the majority were not in fact “intellectually deficient” (ibid.). The 1950s saw the establishment of schools and classes for Romany children. However, as Čaněk points out, these “were not comparable to other minority educational institutions. The language of instruction was Czech, and the reason for their establishment was to collect “neglected” Romany children

in order to teach them some basic skills necessary for school attendance" (ibid.). By 1958 it was no longer legal to place Romany children in schools for the intellectually deficient unless they met the criteria for being assigned to these institutions. Even so, "The significantly over-proportional enrolment of Roma in these (so-called) specialised schools did not end with 1958" and continues to today (Čaněk, 2001, p. 88). The 1976 reform cutting the length of elementary school to 8 years from 9, made elementary school more demanding for all students. In 1970 only 15% of Roma pupils completed a regular elementary school, and the 1976 reform led to a leap in the numbers of Roma being sent to a specialised school because of being unable to meet the demands of the reformed elementary school. This was a matter of less importance under communism, as long as the system produced workers able to undertake the work necessary to the planned economy, and there would always be manual work available.

These two cases of minority recognition (and lack thereof) in education demonstrate the importance of access to linguistically and culturally appropriate education for national minorities. Whilst Poles were free to advance within their capabilities, the education system systematically deprived the sizeable Roma minority of the means of advancement within society.

3.2.7 The Legacy of Communist Education?

Although this account of education in communist Czechoslovakia is primarily descriptive and necessarily limited, it illustrates how pragmatic and ideological concerns combine in education systems to promote and preserve national and social in-groups and out-groups. The aspirational Other promoted was the USSR, but the creation of an ideal "communist man in a communist world" did not preclude promoting a strong sense of national identity – if it remained based on approved syllabuses and did not challenge the *status quo*. Structural measures, such as the establishment of minority schools for Poles and the dismantling of the system of German-medium schools demonstrated how schools could be instrumental in the promotion of integration (without necessarily leading to cultural assimilation) or elimination of other cultures on the national territory. Segregation of Roma children into less academic schools cemented their place as an internal Other, whilst denying them the rights of an official minority. Pragmatic reforms, such as that of 1976, can exacerbate and

entrench existing divisions. This background is crucial to understanding the changes that came about during the transformation period, especially given that the final reform of the communist era, the 1984 Schools Act, essentially remained in place during this time, as did many teachers trained under this system.

3.3 The Education System of the Czech Republic in the Early Transformation Period: 1989-1999

The period between the “Velvet Revolution” and the “Velvet Divorce” saw the education systems of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics undertake a rapid transformation alongside the rest of the state's public institutions. What is perhaps unusual about the reforms that took place in the Czech education system is that they were not chiefly the result of government-led reforms, but the result of a combination of “grassroots” level activity and input from outside organisations, such as Western non-governmental organisations and supranational organisations (Moree, 2013, p. 14; Polyzoi and Černá 2003, p. 43; OECD 1996, p. 22) This period in Czech education cannot be characterised by changes to its legislation, but rather by its lack thereof. The focus during this time was on loosening state control of schools and other educational institutions, eliminating communist ideology from the curriculum, and introducing elements of the market principle to schools through increased pupil and parental choice (Bîrzea, 1994, pp. 62-64). This section will begin by looking at the historical context of some of these changes before examining some of the concrete changes that took place at both a structural and curricular level, before discussing the education of national minorities during the 1990s.

3.3.1 Historical Influences

The legacy of the inter-war Czechoslovak Republic was an important factor in Czech education reform. The First Republic is described by Polzoi and Černá as “a pioneer of educational reform” (2003, p. 51), a process twice interrupted – once by war, once by Communism. The period of communism became viewed as an aberration that had to be overcome, rather than as the starting point for what was to follow (Fasnerová, 2009). Therefore, it may have been

expected that the pioneering spirit of this period might once more prevail. However, it may also be the case that “When it comes to reforming the education systems the imperatives of tradition provide on the one hand a stimulus for change ... and on the other a set of arguments supporting the strongest opposition to any kind of reform” (Philips and Kasser, 1992, p. 7). This raises the important point that, although the Czechoslovak education system might have been considered progressive in the 1930s, in the post-war period liberal reforms were able to be pursued much more fully (for better or worse) in Western European countries and the USA than in any Communist states, and therefore their approaches might be considered a model for progressive reform. Yet this was not entirely the case – tradition and nostalgia for the inter-war “golden era” still exerted a strong influence. Mitter supports this, arguing that, as “educators are actively involved in the popular desire to (re-determine) socio-cultural and political identities” (1992, p. 25). In attempting to break away from the socialist past, there was a tendency among them to look back to a (in many cases imaginary) ideal democratic system in the inter-war period. Mitter singles out Czechoslovakia as the only state among them to have had genuine democracy during this time, although the extent to which this is true is disputed (see, for example, Heimann, 2009). Nostalgia for a “golden era” in the inter-war period possibly acted as a hindrance to learning from other countries where progressive approaches to education had taken root, not only from a desire to replicate the structures (and by extension cultures) of that time, but also from a reaction against another wave of influences from outside of the nation at a point where the organisations seeking to assist reform were distinctly Western and market oriented (e.g. PHARE, OECD etc.). In addition, as Polyzoi and Černá discuss in detail, there are significant behavioural barriers to reform, as the system must also overcome "the inertia of acquired attitudes and behaviour patterns" (Kalous, 1997 in Polyzoi and Černá, 2003, p. 40) and undergo a process of “reculturing”. Reculturing, however, requires some agreement on what the new culture should look like, and in the early transformation period, the emphasis on removing communist influence meant that it was defined in negative, rather than positive terms (i.e. not communist) and the lack of coherent policy developments in the 1990s meant that practitioners had no clear guidelines to follow, other than being expected to conform to the expectations of. Moree explains that:

> *"To samozřejmě vyžadovalo harmonizaci legislativy struktur v postkomunistických zemích s mezinárodním standardem. Jenže tento mezinárodní standard vznikl jako výsledek, produkt určité kultury, a ta byla odlišná od té, která byla hybnou silou v postkomunistických společnostech"*[33] (2013, p. 14).

This required re-culturing was complicated by a lack of trust in the transforming political system, as for some people the *"stát zůstal i po letech jejich úhlavním nepřítelem*"[34] (Moree, 2013, p.15-16). This meant that top-down reforms were sometimes viewed with suspicion, yet without co-ordinated guidance, reforms to the education system were likely to be piecemeal.

3.3.2 Structural Changes

The OECD identified that four key features and principles correlate to "the general aims of the overall transformation process. First of all, the education system had to be "depoliticised", which a report on Czech schools described as a process well underway (OECD, 1996). Secondly, pupils and parents should have to choose the type of education most suitable for them (for example: applying market principles so that pupils may be able to attend schools outside of their catchment areas). Thirdly, the state monopoly on education had to be abolished, with faith schools and private schools able to be established. Finally, management structures in education had to be decentralized, a process "achieved so far by delegating to municipalities, schools and their directors a number of decision-making powers" (OECD, 1996, p. 17). The implementation of these reforms is credited to the replacement of incremental funding with formula funding, thus making schools and local authorities responsible for their own spending, therefore more autonomous (ibid.). The report views the changes that took place in Czech education favourably and assumes that the application of market principles would result in the Czech school system's successful reform. However, in the absence of consensus of what "success" looks like between all stakeholders, the efficacy of the recommended reforms is difficult to gauge.

[33] "This, of course, required harmonization of the legislation of US structures in post-communist countries with the international standard. But this international standard grew out of a certain culture, one which was different the driving force in post-communist societies".
[34] "The state remained their main enemy, even after many years".

In terms of changes to the institutions themselves, presently there remain four levels of public educational institutions in the Czech Republic, which roughly correspond, in terms of the levels of education available, to those that existed under communism. These are: *mateřské školy* (nursery schools)*, základní školy* (primary schools)*, střední školy* (secondary schools). Secondary schools are further divided into: *gymnázia*, *střední odborné školy*, and *střední odborné učiliště*, *conservatoires, vyšší odborná školy, základní umělecké školy* (grammar schools, technical institutes, conservatories, further vocational schools, and elementary arts schools, respectively). Although the types of schools on offer were very similar before and after 1989, the above described changes to school funding and educational legislation were intended to facilitate "reculturing" at the institutional level in a system composed of "the paradoxical coexistence of old and new structures" (Bîrzea, 1994, p. 17). However, soon after 1989, one significant institutional alteration had been made: the (re)introduction of the *víceleté gymnázium* ("multi-year" gymnasium) – a type of selective school that had existed in the inter-war period. As the name suggests, it is a type of *gymnázium,* which is attended for longer – eight years instead of the usual six. The idea behind these schools is to provide the most able pupils with more intellectual stimulation than would normally be provided in the latter years of *základní škola*, but their re-establishment means that selection of students by ability occurs at an earlier stage. These schools were resurrected as a reaction to the attempts at comprehensive education that had been promoted during the communist period, conforming to the trend among post-communist countries of harking back to inter-war structures. However, as Straková (2010) argues, separation by ability at earlier ages may lead to the exacerbation of existing educational inequalities within a society.

In addition to the reintroduction of selective state schools, a non-state education sector began to be established, with the first private and denominational schools opening. By the mid-1990s, these fee-paying schools accounted for around 25% of the total number of schools, educating around 13% of the total student body (OECD, 1996, p. 42). The introduction of private schools was to diversify the supply of education "so that it could better correspond to the interests of pupils and needs of the labour market" (OECD, 1996, p. 41). However, the private schools were mainly popular at secondary level. In the early years the state had the overwhelming majority of schools

with only 0.2% of the total student body attending private institutions for basic school (*základní škola*). The establishment of private schools, however, does not mean that in these institutions the state has relinquished control over the schooling of their citizens. All Czech nationals must still attend a prescribed programme of lessons in Czech language, literature, history, and geography that form part of the compulsory state education. Pupils often attend these classes alongside their other lessons, therefore Czech nationals attending private international schools often have a significantly heavier workload than their non-Czech peers.

Czech programme notwithstanding, the general impact of these institutional and structural changes was to reduce government control over schools and increase choices for parents and students. However, this in itself can lead to the entrenchment or establishment of inequalities, as it has been shown that restricting the choice of school creates less inequality than systems that promote choice at an early stage (Erikson and Jonsson, 1996). As we shall see, this can have important consequences in a society such as the Czech Republic's, where educational disadvantage is strongly connected to ethnicity in the case of the Roma population (Roma Education Fund, 2011; Amnesty International, 2010). The overall failure of the Czech education system under communism to either effectively assimilate the Roma population or adequately equip its members with the skills for work beyond that which the state provided for them, meant that this group was hit hard by economic transformation. Despite the new political system granting Roma official minority status, gains in the education of Roma pupils, even at elementary levels remain few, and segregation into special schools remained normal (Roma Education Fund, 2011; Amnesty International, 2010). Post-transformation, parents have had the final say in which schools they think are most suitable for their children. However, as “Educated parents consider education to be important, understand the education system and are able to advise their children on their choice of school, as children with disadvantageous family backgrounds often receive far less support from their parents,” (Straková, 2010, p. 55), simply having freedom to choose schools does not equal freedom to access educational opportunities as there are many other factors at play.

Overall, the changes made to the education system increased choice for some – especially those able to educate their children privately – and

decreased the amount of direct ideological pressure on schools. However, the state retained some strong influence of the content of Czech pupils' education, especially as it pertained to the nation and its culture, by ensuring that the *základní škola* curriculum is followed by all Czech nationals, regardless of the type of school that they attend. Although the parents and pupils were able to exercise more freedom in the type of school they chose, this choice was not always totally free, especially for more disadvantaged groups.

3.3.3 Curricular Changes

School curricula consist of a "planned programme of objectives, content, learning experiences, resources and assessment offered by a school" (UNESCO, 2010), which exists alongside a "hidden curriculum" made up of "lessons about behaviour, personal relationships, the use of power and authority, competition, sources of motivation and so on that students learn at school" (ibid.). The interaction between these is complex, but the classification and framing of subjects in the formal curriculum conveys a powerful symbolic message about the importance of certain types of knowledge, and this can form part of the "hidden curriculum" imbibed by students (Bernstein, 2000).

In the Czech Republic, as in Czechoslovakia, history and citizenship were taught at the upper primary level as part of a wider subject area of *vlastivěda* ("homeland studies") (comprised of history, geography, and citizenship education). The name of the subject suggests that these were the subjects most connected with forming an attachment to the "homeland", as the root-word "*vlast"* in Czech carries connotations of innateness, uniqueness, ownership, and propriety. Nowadays, the subject is only called this up until the fifth grade, after which it breaks down into the specialised subject areas. The symbolic implication of this is that the homeland is made up of its past (represented by history), its land (represented by geography), and its people (represented by citizenship education). That these subjects form the basis of the compulsory Czech programme of education that all Czech nationals must follow, regardless of the type of school that they attend indicates that knowledge of these subjects is considered by policy makers to be in some way necessary for creating an attachment to the nation.

The general trend in educational policy in the region was that "All the innovative approaches are focused on the *removal of all indoctrinating*

pressures" which had existed in socialist educational establishments (Mitter, 1992, p. 21). Although the curriculum and pedagogy had been strictly controlled throughout the communist era, ideas about "progressive education" may not have disappeared, despite ideological pressures (Anweiler, 1992, p. 34). The progressive approach, which has its roots in Komenskýs thinking, had exerted considerable influence in Russia, Czechoslovakia and Poland after WWI until they were "denounced as bourgeois and reactionary" under communism (ibid.). The "progressive" approach to education is distinguished by a more "humanistic" and individual approach to teaching with emphasis on diversity, creativity and independence rather than the uniformity and teacher-led pedagogy that characterised earlier schools, and it was becoming popular in Czechoslovakia before the Second World War (Fasnerová, 2009, p. 16). Parízek notes that the changes after 1989 meant that *základní škola* "is becoming more appropriate to the development of children and their individual interests and abilities" and that "The basic school curriculum places a stronger emphasis on the humanistic concept of education" (1992, p. 77). This was a key element of the educational approach during the initial transformation period, indicating that the ideas had retained credibility among practitioners who lacked the freedom or institutional capacity to enact them.

The transition to a less ideologically-driven approach to education was not unproblematic, however. It had a had a particular impact on the teaching of subjects like history and literature to the extent that in 1990 a suspension of assessments in history took place for all school grades to allow teachers to deal with the rapid changes (Mitter, 1992, p. 21). There was also a lack of suitable materials for teaching the new, supposedly ideology-free, curricula. In the rush to produce these materials, those that were available were not always fit for purpose. Parízek outlines problems of textbooks being used following the 1990 reform as "inadequate to children and one-sided" (1992, p. 78). He also mentions that "... some teachers – and the authors of textbooks – stress knowledge of facts and concepts and underestimate the knowledge of relations between facts and concepts, laws, reasons and consequences, conditions etc." (ibid.). The tension between the value of learning facts versus concepts and critical thinking skills has been a key feature of educational reform since 1989 and was a recurring theme throughout the interviews conducted in this study. Diversification of the curriculum, which up until that point had been uniform for all schools and pupils, also raised concerns as it

can be problematic for pupils who move between schools. It also has implications for the standardisation of assessments; as content varies, so much exams, which makes comparison between students from different institutions difficult.

3.3.4 Language Medium and Foreign Language Teaching

Foreign language teaching was one of the areas where changes in education in post-communist countries was immediate and obvious. It also provided an indication of the sort of identity the post-communist states sought to establish for themselves. During the communist period, Czech had been the chief medium of education in the Czech part of the Federal Republic, and Russian was the main foreign language taught. After the fall of communism, the language medium remained unchanged, but post-1989, Russian was mostly replaced with English, German, and French. As Moree points out *"Velkou hnací silou této země byla touha vyrovnat se Západu, vrátit se na Západ"*[35] (2013, p. 13) – the shift in languages taught was emblematic of the return to the West, but as exactly what "returning" meant was still not clear or agreed upon.

Anweiler attributes the post-transformation shift from Russian language in schools to English, German, and French to a "socio-psychological reaction against the Eastward orientation of the Communist Party", describing it as "one of the most visible signs of the oft-proclaimed 'way back to Europe'" (1992, p. 31). More controversially, he states that "in historical terms the withdrawal of Russian as a means of communication among the peoples of this area is nothing more than the restitution of the traditional affiliation of the majority to the Latin heritage of Europe" (Anweiler, 1922, p. 31), a point of view that fits in nicely with the narrative of the natural democratic impulses of the Czech nation, but is somewhat difficult to prove empirically. Regardless of the of the impulse that drove it, reform of education has been described as "a natural nation-building project working through language" (Galbreath, 2005, p. 171). Although the Czech Republic did not have the significant Russian speaking minorities that caused conflict over the language medium of education that

[35] "The great driving force of this country was the desire to come to terms with the West, to return to the West".

took place in the post-Soviet Baltic states, school language instruction was still a means of communicating ideas about Othering and belonging. For small countries, such as the Baltic States and the Czech and Slovak Republics, coming out of the sphere of Soviet influence triggered the necessity of political reorientation. However, Mitter attributes the shift in foreign language teaching in schools in the region to a general revival of nationalism which is not altogether rational; at the time when Russian was being replaced as the main foreign language with Western European languages, he says "it should be noted that reasonable arguments suggesting that Russian should not be neglected among the neighbours of the former Soviet Union hardly receive that attention they deserve in those countries" (1992, p.25). Whether the motivation was ideological or pragmatic, the consequence was the almost total decimation of Russian in Czech schools, sending a powerful symbolic signal that the nation was (re)joining the West.

3.3.5 Education of National Minorities in the 1990s

The educational provision for minority groups is an important consideration when discussing the role of nation building on national identity. If they are either segregated, excluded, or subject to assimilationist policies that deny their differences, not only does this potentially infringe their rights, but also signals the Otherness of these groups to the rest of society. In this way, exclusion and disenfranchisement can become symbolically normalised.

Detailed statistical information about the number of ethnic, national, and linguistic minorities in Czech state schools during the 1990s is scarce. However, information on the numbers of foreign residents of the Czech Republic is available and shows that the numbers of foreign residents steadily increased during the 1990s, with the main groups among them being Ukrainians, Slovaks, Poles, Vietnamese, and Roma (České statistický úřad, 2014). These figures suggest that the number of foreign children entitled to attend state schools also increased during this time, although precise data is unavailable. The number of Roma pupils in attendance is particularly difficult to establish, due to the relatively small proportion of people who choose "Roma" as their nationality in the census, which does not allow for a distinction between nationality and ethnicity (Katzorová, et al., 2008, p. 23). This is further compounded by the fact the collection of ethnicity-based statistics in education

is prohibited (Katzorová, et al., 2008, p. 11). The problem with such "colour-blindness" in education policy, is that is can be a means of disguising racial prejudice, by categorising problems associated with racial discrimination in other terms, such as social problems, class, or nationality (Omi and Winnant, 2005).

Besides Roma, the main groups of non-Czech pupils being educated in the Czech Republic were Slovaks, Vietnamese, and Ukrainians. In the case of Slovaks and Vietnamese, these were already well-established immigrant communities by the 1990s, whereas the numbers of Ukrainians surged in the 1990s as a result of economic migration (Katzorová, et al., 2008, p. 21). This means that during the early transformation period, the Czech school system had to accommodate a student body of increasing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity, as well as adapting to the new socio-political and economic circumstances.

Prior to the Schools Act 2004, which provided a national legal basis for protection against discrimination based on national or ethnic origin, there was much less clarity regarding the rights of pupils of non-Czech national or ethnic origin in Czech schools. However, discrimination was forbidden under European and international human rights laws. According to article 10a of the Czech constitution, this ought to supersede national law in the event of conflict with it (Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, 1992). Additionally, in 1995 the Czech Republic signed the Framework for the Protection of Minority Rights, which it ratified in 1997. This set out the obligation to "foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority" (Council of Europe, 1995, Article 12.1) and to "to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities" (Council of Europe, 1995, Article 12.3). Education was considered to be a particularly important area for the development of a "spirit of tolerance" and the promotion of "mutual respect, understanding and co-operation" (Council of Europe, 1995, Article 17). It is clear, therefore, that during the 1990s there existed a legislative basis existed for officially recognised national minorities to access education, and there was even some support for providing education in minority languages:

> *"In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the*

framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language" (Council of Europe, 1995, article 14).

However, the caveat that there must be sufficient demand meant that Czech authorities were able to claim that provision of education in minority languages was "not in the interests" of members of those minorities, as their dispersal meant that finding enough pupils in a given area to create a minority school was a virtual impossibility (Europa, 2005). This meant that, within the public sector at least, education was slow to react to the increasingly diverse population.

Despite the paucity of information regarding the situation of many of the national minority groups in education, the European Roma Rights Centre compiled substantial evidence of Roma pupils facing segregation and discrimination during the 1990s (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999). Although public interest in this issue has increased since 1989, until more recently this was not accompanied by a great deal of political interest or academic research (Katzorová, et al., 2008). What is not clear is whether some or all of the issues faced by Roma pupils were also experienced by those from other minority groups, nor to what extent. It is possible that Roma populations have better organised advocacy groups, such as the ERRC and the Roma Education Fund, and are therefore better represented in the literature.

In the Czech Republic, Roma were granted official minority status in 1991 and therefore were no longer subject to the policy of assimilation that had dictated their position in education under the communist regime. However, it does not appear that official recognition of their status strengthened the position of Roma pupils in Czech schools, despite the obligations outlined above in the Framework for the Protection of National Minorities. According the ERRC, the experience of Roma pupils in Czech schools during the 1990s was characterised by segregation. They reported that some remedial "special schools" were acting as "Romani ghettos", as Roma children were disproportionally represented in these establishments (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999, p. 6). A significant factor contributing to the segregation of Roma pupils is related to the generally low socio-economic status of many Roma families; in 1992, fees for attending nursery classes were introduced. After that date, uptake of nursery places declined, particularly among worse-

off families. To offset the impact of this among the Roma community, pre-school “preparatory classes” for pupils from “socially disadvantaged” backgrounds were introduced (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999, p.78). However, the implementation of this policy exacerbated the problem of segregation, as these preparatory classes were frequently run at the “special schools”, where pupils would generally remain upon completion, rather than changing to a new school in the first grade. The ERRC argued that “The ‘preparation’ is for segregation” rather than integration into mainstream basic schools (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999, p.79). The early stage at which segregation by means of these preparatory classes occurs means that it is likely to continue throughout a child’s education – due to the reduced curriculum followed at basic schools, re-integration into a mainstream basic school is all but impossible, as the pupils would be too far behind their peers of the same age in mainstream classes. The consequences of this can be disastrous for individual pupils, as those who attend a “special” (remedial) basic school following a reduced curriculum are less likely to progress to standard secondary school. As a result, life chances are determined at a very early stage in a pupil’s educational career. At a societal level, this can entrench existing patterns of inequality, with the effect being more pronounced the earlier segregation occurs (Straková, 2010).

Even where efforts are made to accommodate the needs of Romani pupils by individual schools, this can also have the unintended consequence of increasing segregation. An example is given from the town of Opava, where a (remedial) school took measures to include elements of Romani language, culture, and history in its educational programme. Most pupils attending the school were of Roma origin, and the school altered its programme to reflect this, with very positive results - most notably a 300% increase in school attendance. However, the success of this school led to further segregation, as parents opted to place their children at this school instead of the more “Romani-hostile” schools in the area, and teachers declined to work there because of “’what sort of school it is’” (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999, p. 40). This example illustrates that individual efforts to overcome the deficiencies of the school system are insufficient in themselves, and that a united, co-ordinated effort – legitimised and supported from the highest levels of government – is required to tackle the issue of segregation in education.

A counter-example to the idea that segregation inevitably leads to exclusion is provided by the Polish case, where segregation into Polish-medium schools has apparently not inhibited integration. The system of Polish-medium schools that had existed during the communist period remained largely extant during the transformation period (Europa, 2005). The positive outcomes achieved here may be attributable to the close relationship between Polish and Czech language, and the fact that much of the time their colloquial forms are mutually intelligible (Europa, 2005), so a Polish speaker is not likely to feel completely alienated in a Czech speaking environment . However, it may also be due to the fact that having one's own language and culture treated as equal and legitimate does not present a barrier to integration but may actually encourage interaction with the host culture on more equal terms.

For Roma pupils, though, the risk of disenfranchisement was present even where they were not taught in physically segregated environments, due to the cultural and attitudinal barriers they face. Even when Romani children are educated in mainstream schools and classes where they have access to the full curriculum, they "find few role-models in the Czech curriculum" and "learn only a racially designated subsection of their community's culture and history" (European Roma Rights Centre, 1999, p. 47). When this takes place in an environment where textbooks produce a "one-sided" view of the nation's history - as Mitter suggested was the case with Czech textbooks in the early 1990s (1992, p.78) - the power of the dominant culture to re-assert itself is enhanced, whilst the position of the minority culture can be diminished as the dominant narratives' legitimacy is symbolically reiterated through the pedagogisation of knowledge. In this environment, even where physical integration can take place, members of a minority might find it more difficult than others to acquire the knowledge needed to thrive in the school environment, as the school environment tacitly favours those from the dominant culture due to the cultural capital they possess (Bourdieu, 2010). Alongside the structures that perpetuate divisions through segregations, the symbolic control exercised by the dominant society is legitimised through the attitudes of teachers and the content of pedagogical materials, enabling the marginalisation of Others to continue.

Some minority groups were able to take advantage of the freedom offered by the newly established private sector to protect and promote

education in languages other than Czech, often with the support of external government funding (Europa, 2005). The institution of a private sector in education early in the 1990s allowed for the establishment of private schools, which meant that demand for education in minority languages could be met outside of the public sector, potentially easing pressure on state schools to provide these services. A private school of "German-Czech understanding" was established in 1991 (*Základní škola německo-českého porozumění*), and a German grammar school was established in 1995, followed by a Czech-German primary school (*Základní škola*) in 1997. An attempt was made to establish a Slovak school in 1997, following the closure of the only Slovak school in the country in the mid-1990s, but this failed to due insufficient enrolment (ibid.). A private Roma school was also established in 1998. The Czech Ministry of Education partially subsidises private sector education, but by allowing the private sector to take over the provision of education in minority languages, it fails to eliminate problems of parallel education sectors potentially entrenching differences between groups in society. In particular, it risks leaving choice in education available only to those who are able to pay for it.

3.3.6 The Multi-cultural Imperative on the Road to EU Membership

The 1990s saw an increased diversity in the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Czech Republic which looked set to increase as the country moved toward EU membership and the prospect of free movement. It is reasonable to expect that meeting the needs and respecting the rights of all members of a more diverse population might present both cultural and institutional challenges for what had been, for the latter half of the twentieth century, a fairly homogeneous state. Multiculturalism is one possible response to these challenges and has been the dominant model for Western democracies in the late twentieth century. It "is based on the principle and concept of nation state which emphasize regional, linguistic, and cultural union" among the different cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups that reside within it, allowing different cultures to peacefully co-exist in an environment where "differences are not regarded as conflicts but a source of richness" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 2). It differs from assimilation (the idea of the "melting pot", in which cultures blend upon

contact) which tends to favour the dominant culture as that “is a one-way conditional relationship with the state controlling, amongst many things, personal identity” but the distinction between the two can be marginal (Race, 2014, p. 215).

Multicultural education, therefore, should further the idea that difference in a society is, or can be, a valuable resource rather than a threat to stability, yet it must avoid dictating what individual responses to difference should be. It can be thought of as an attempt to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, are able to experience equality in education (Banks and McGee Banks, 2016). On the basis of educational equality, other types of equality might be expected to follow. However, the changes required for the attainment of educational equality in the Czech Republic’s education system, where assimilation then segregation have characterised minority access to education throughout much of its recent history, would need to happen at all levels, from the political and structural to the personal.

Following the adoption of the multicultural model in Canada in the 1970s, it was widely adopted in Europe and Western liberal democracies as the standard progressive approach to increased diversity. Although not uncontested, it constituted a clear trend until the mid-1990s, which saw a “backlash and retreat from multiculturalism, and a re-assertion of ideas of nation building, common values and identity, and unitary citizenship – even a return of assimilation“ (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 133). The re-assertion of national identities was particularly pronounced, but not limited to the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic (Cakl, 2005). However, in spite of the “backlash”, multiculturalism remained a mainstay of cultural and education policy in the European Union (European Commission, 2003). As the Czech Republic looked towards full membership of the EU, it was faced with having to adapt to policies that had been tried, tested, and already called into question elsewhere.

Notwithstanding potential objections to the idea of multiculturalism itself, incorporating multiculturalism into education is important in promoting multicultural values, as it has been shown that exposure alone is insufficient for students to recognise the value of diversity in society (European Commission, 2003). If multiculturalism is concerned with “the problem of

identity and the accommodation of diversity" (Wright, et al., 2012, p. 7), multicultural education attempts to present pupils with the opportunity of exploring their own distinct ethnic and cultural identity in relation to others without fear of it being diluted, eroded or subsumed. After all, education is the forum in which people develop a "common cultural identity" which need not be exclusive of Others (Coelho, 1998, p. 21). Indeed, it has been pointed out that, in some populations at least, "Schools represent the most consistent source of knowledge about the intellectual legacies, histories and struggles of racialised peoples" (Taylor and Hoeschmann, 2012, p. 325). If Czech education has previously been successful in creating an idea of the nation which is unified and homogeneous based on a shared history, then it follows that education may also have a significant part to play in creating a view of the nation that is more diverse and in line with a civic model of citizenship.

In schools, citizenship education is one of the main curriculum subjects associated with promoting multiculturalism in education, and throughout Europe it is tasked with "Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship" (Eurydice, 2012). But this opportunity can be missed or subject to "an integrationist, state controlled and influenced idea" depending on what is taught (Race, 2012, p. 336). Ensuring that citizenship education promotes a version of multiculturalism that is more than a one-way transaction between the dominant culture and minorities is a significant challenge. If the citizenship curriculum is strongly framed, with a clear set of objectives in mind, it risks imposing a centrally dictated view of what citizenship looks like. On the other hand, if the curriculum is more flexible and responsive, and objectives are not clearly set out, then it risks reproducing existing hierarchies (Bernstein, 2000). On top of this, it could be argued that post-communist contexts provide a uniquely challenging environment for the introduction of multicultural citizenship education (or indeed any education reform), as increased state involvement in education may be regarded with some suspicion. As legislation changed to ensure the criteria for EU membership was met, there was a lack of consensus about what this "return to the West" actually meant for Czech society (Moree, 2013). This presented a distinctive set of circumstances for the introduction of a multicultural agenda.

The failure of Western critics to acknowledge and respect this intersectional distinction is criticised by Perry (2006), who questions whether

the insistence on Czech schools conforming to multicultural (and other pedagogical) norms is based assumptions that Czech education is in some way deficient merely because it is different to what is common in “the West”. This failure to take local circumstances into account could be viewed as an Orientalist position . Although this is apparently ironic, it is not necessarily as oxymoronic as it first seems – if multiculturalism aims to tackle discriminatory practices, its proponents must challenge them where they see them; as discussed above, many such practices could be seen in the Czech education system in the 1990s. Prospective EU membership placed multicultural education at the forefront of Czech education reform. Although not it was not uncontested, even in countries with an established tradition of multiculturalism in education, it forms a central component of much EU policy, especially in relation to education, and the Czech Republic’s education policy was expected to fall into line with this orthodoxy, and the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] (MŠMT, 2001) reflected that. However, even since accession to the EU, the treatment of Roma pupils in Czech schools has been a major stumbling block on the road to the Czech Republic being seen as a genuinely multicultural society.

3.4 Roma Education – Global and Czech Perspectives

Despite multiculturalism and equality becoming a central part of European and Czech education policies, as the country prepared for membership of the European Union, Roma pupils continue to face a particular set of challenges in accessing education both in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Europe. They are one of the largest and poorest ethnic minority groups in Europe and present a major test of the abilities of EU member states to include the most marginalized groups in society (European Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2016). However, despite increased research, funding, and educational programmes, the problem seems intractable, and “the general circumstances of Roma communities have not improved” (Liégeois, 2007, p. 24). The barriers to accessing education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GR&T) pupils are complex but can include: language barriers; segregation and self-segregation; direct and indirect discrimination; and bullying. This section describes some of the difficulties faced by Roma students accessing education and puts them in the context of similar struggles faced by Gypsy and Traveller children in the

United Kingdom. It goes on to discuss responses to these challenges and why they have not yet had the desired impact. It also considers whether some successful approaches used to promote the inclusion of Traveller children in UK schools could be applicable in the Czech context.

Lack of competence in the titular language is a common justification for the early segregation of Roma pupils when they start school (Amnesty International, 2015). Whilst on the one hand, having a mother-tongue different to the language medium of the school might constitute a legitimate need for additional support in school, this often comes at a cost of developing literacy and proficiency in the Romani language. It also often takes place in remedial classes separate from other students, and this segregation usually continues after they have had the opportunity to "catch-up" linguistically with their peers (Kyuchukov, et al., 2017). Not only does this early segregation potentially breach Roma pupils' right to an education that develops their "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (United Nations, 1989, p. art. 29 (a)), but also deprives non-Roma pupils of their right to an education that prepares them for "responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples" (Amnesty International, 2015, p. art. 29 (d)) by denying pupils the opportunity to interact with their peers from different cultural and racial backgrounds.

Ending the segregation of Romani pupils was a central recommendation of reports by the Roma Rights Centre (2003, 2005), yet segregation remains an obstacle to the integration of Romani pupils in schools across Europe (Amnesty International, 2015). Using language ability to justify segregation is one of the ways in which the discussion of Roma rights has been de-racialised (i.e. the students are not segregated because they are Roma, they are separated because of their difficulties with the language). Miskovic argues that "As a dark-complexioned ethnic minority, the Roma have suffered racial discrimination and exclusion ever since they migrated to Europe. And yet, with a few notable exceptions, their plight is carefully expressed through the language of 'culture', 'nationality', and 'ethnicity'" (2009, p. 201). By separating the discussion of Roma rights from that of race not only allows individuals, institutions and governments to avoid accusations of racism, but means that the educational problems faced by Roma become

mere “social problems” as opposed to the outcome of Roma being educated in an inherently racist system (Bancroft, 2005). As Modood points out: “If equal dignity focuses on what people have in common and so is gender-blind, colour-blind and so on, equal respect is based on an understanding that difference is also important in conceptualizing and institutionalizing equal relations between individuals” (2014, p. 47). For difference to be accommodated institutionally, it must first be recognised and discussed plainly, rather than euphemised.

The segregation of Romani pupils into different classes is also sometimes the product of ‘self- segregation’, where parents send their children to the smaller schools, closer to where they live, that have more support. Some schools then become known as Roma Schools, or even “ghetto schools”. Rona and Lee (2001) point out that some parents might make this selection possibly without realising the long-term consequences of this choice for their children - an argument which highlights the complexity of the problems faced. As a consequence of racist attitudes, Roma parents might be considered incompetent or incapable of making the “correct” decisions on behalf of themselves their children; these judgements are implicit in the language used to rule in favour of the complainants in the *D. H. and Others* case in the Czech Republic (New, 2011; Amnesty International, 2010). The perception persists that Roma parents do not value education in the same way that other parents do - it has been argued that “Roma parents who send their children to school have not incorporated education and academic achievement into their value system (Cspeli and Simon, 2004), and so are happy to send their children to the “special” schools where they are likely to be with other Roma pupils and receive more support. The fact that parents with poor literacy skills themselves are unable to help their children with homework might also be a factor. However, there may be other factors, such as institutional racism, bullying and harassment that Roma pupils face in mainstream schools which might make self-segregation appear a rational option for parents (Cashman, 2017; Bhopal, 2002; Jordan, 2001).

Although the assumption that Roma parents do not (or cannot) see the value in educating their children is clearly a racist one, there may be some historical and/or cultural factors that might feed into a reluctance to engage

with the national-education system. For example: experiences of assimilationist policies in the communist period where integration was associated with a loss of cultural identity, the association of schooling with a restrictive public sphere that does not value the expression of Romani culture, and the lack of representation of Roma culture in the curriculum are among these (Miskovic, 2009). Roma parents must be given grounds to trust schools with their children's' education without losing their personal cultural identity. Fears of identity loss recur in discussions about GR&T students' reluctance to engage with schooling (Miskovic, 2013; Bhopal and Myers, 2009). It is easy to see how these fears are justified when considering of the solutions implemented to engage Roma in education in Slovakia. A Roma school was established run and staffed by Roma, where gifted pupils could board - but this involves pupils separating themselves from their families and local communities, albeit voluntarily. Despite the potential difficulties of this type of solution, New says that "after visiting schools, integrated and segregated with Roma pupils relegated physically and psychologically to the back row … it is difficult not to feel that justice is being done, or at least attempted" (2013, p. 190). However, the idea of promoting educational "choice" of school as a means of pursuing educational equality is criticised by Miskovic, who points out that in the USA where charter schools have been "created by marginalised groups around their own interests - may be promising spaces where "otherness" feels safe … [they] run the risk of abandoning the larger goal of integrated education …" (Miskovic, 2013, p. 29). Indeed, allowing and institutionalising the Otherness of a particular group risks further reinforcing that groups position as Other in the society.

More successful approaches seem to have been taken in the UK, where GR&T parents are more likely to view education as important for their children, but where participation in education is still fraught with many of the challenges faced by Roma elsewhere in Europe - bullying, anxieties about loss of cultural identity, and irrelevant or inaccessible curriculum content (Bhopal, 2002). The Traveller Education Service has been an instrumental part of this process, as it allowed members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to advocate for other members of the community in educational settings, and also allowed schools to be more responsive to the needs of their communities (ibid.). The devolved governments in the UK now have their own programmes

(such as the Scottish Traveller Education Programme in Scotland) to help educators become more aware of the needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Further examples of “good practice” include:

> “Recognizing the circumstances and characteristics of GR&T culture in the locality of schools was itself a marker of ‘good practice’ along with a range of other measures. These included factors influencing access to school (relationships with GR&T pupils and parents, arrangements for admissions policies); factors influencing attainment (recognition of ethnic status of GR&T groups, how bullying/racist incidents are dealt with, learning and study support, support with homework activities); staff responsibilities (collective responsibility of the school towards GR&T pupils, implementation of behaviour policies, designation of sanctuary territory for GR&T pupils); and the role of the TES (relationship of TES with GR&T community and school, raising awareness through training and informative documentation” (Bhopal and Myers, 2009. P. 304).

However, as Miskovic points out, education policy needs “more than a translation of borrowed ideas” (Miskovic, 2009, p. 211), and there may be problems with transposing successful approaches from one place to another without carefully considering local contexts. For example, not all Travellers and Gypsies may have the visible Otherness in the form of dark skin that Roma in the Czech Republic typically possess. Czech Roma, therefore, might be more “obvious” targets for racist behaviour and bullying. Building trusting relationships with members of the Roma community might also be hampered by language barriers. Institutional racism that emphasises a deficit model, in which Roma are expected “to adapt to Czech ways rather than as citizens who are entitled to services on their own terms” (Cashman, 2017, p. 595) is also a significant factor, as is political apathy towards the process of reform. Miskovic questions “whether EU policy-making entities were concerned with minority rights as such in the first place, or whether they were satisfied with surface-level action such as the mere adoption of policies that served as a condition for EU membership” (Miskovic, 2013, p. 2). This sentiment is echoed on the Czech side by Moree, points out the distinction between formal compliance with European requirements and genuine commitment to building an inclusive

European identity, asking whether "*Je naší cílovou stanicí evropské budova nebo evropský domov?"*[36] (Moree, 2013, p. 13). Building a European home "*…je práce postavená na drobných interakcích, symbolických výměnách a ochotě k naslouchání*"[37] (ibid.), and these interactions and symbolic exchanges must involve *all* stakeholders to be successful. The examples of good practice outlined above require significant commitment at the level of schools, local authorities and individual staff members to be successful. If inclusive policy measures are perceived as an imposition by a more powerful Other, then they are unlikely to be implemented in the spirit that they are intended to be without an overhaul of the attitudes of the majority population. Nicolae suggests that rather than focus on the marginalised communities themselves,

> "It might be that education is the solution for the majority populations. Aggressive education against the myths of nationalisms, about the many racist-based genocides, about colonialism, slavery and looting on which most of the European and North-American wealth is built on... This would most certainly have a much stronger impact than any Roma-focused programs on education" (2012).

Certainly, shifting the focus of the debate away from the real or imagined shortcomings of marginalised groups, and reminding members of the majority populations not only of their privilege, but the source of it would be a good starting point. By breaking down nationalist narratives, especially those based around victimisation and the role of the oppressed, it may be possible to foster the sense of empathy required to drive positive change that is not simply perceived as positive discrimination.

3.5 Summary and Reflections on Mass Education and Nation Building in the Czech Republic

The establishment of mass education in the Czech lands, and in particular schools using Czech language as the medium of instruction, seems to have some relationship with the development of a Czech national consciousness. Whether this is coincidence or correlation is debatable. Authors such as

[36] "Is our final destination a European house or a European home?".
[37] "… is work built on small interactions, symbolic exchanges, and a willingness to listen".

Gellner (1983) and Smith (1996) point out the fact that education appears to form an essential pillar of nation-building projects, and Green (2013) goes further, arguing that mass education was an essential element of the state-building process. However, the Czech case is interesting, as the school system was established whilst the Czech lands still formed part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and the establishment of Czech medium schools was seemed more concerned with ensuring the economic usefulness of the Czech-speaking citizens of the Empire than facilitating their social advancement within the predominantly German-speaking society. Yet the schools were an institutional expression of an identity that pre-dated them, and mass education in the Czech language seems to have consolidated a conception of national identity that that was bolstered by Romantic historical narratives during the national revival. This trend continued for the first half of the twentieth century, as the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire paved the way for the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

Education in the First Republic was diverse, with language medium schools for different linguistic populations. The humanistic ideas of Komenský exerted some influence during this time, as “progressive” ideas about education became popular, until a return to a more “traditional” didactic model with the establishment of the communist regime. Throughout the communist period, schools remained important in promoting a sense of national identity. However, they were also subject to attempts to re-direct the ideological affiliation of the nation towards the ideals of Soviet socialism (Smith, 2001). This involved tight state control over the curriculum through the introduction of compulsory Russian language study, increased focus on practical subjects and vocational training, and most especially in history lessons where politically inconvenient events were eliminated from the national narrative. However, these educational measures were not sufficient to deliver the desired ideological shift in society, which may be seen as demonstrating the limits of what education can affect in society.

The early transformation period was characterised by loosening of state control over education, as the focus was on removing the ideological influence of the communist period. However, the removal of “indoctrinating pressures” arguably left something of an ideological vacuum (Mitter, 1992, p.17). At the same time, the application of market principles to the education system paved

the way for creation (or entrenchment) of educational inequalities, especially with regard to the Roma population, as a wider range of schools and school types separated children by ability, wealth, and even race. Later in the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, prospective, and then actual membership of the European Union saw external forces exert influence over the Czech school system, especially with regard to multiculturalism in education. However, beyond legislation, it is arguable that this influence has changed little "on the ground" in Czech schools (Cashman, 2017). This demonstrates that the policy changes that have taken place since the publication of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] in 2001 have not yet had the effect of making Czech schools more culturally inclusive.

This account of the historical development of Czech education illustrates how ideas about nationality and nation-building have been an important, although not always central, concern in Czech education since its inception. The teaching of history in particular has been seen as critical in the development of national consciousness, suggesting that being able to locate a national identity in the context of a historical narrative is considered particularly important. The empirical data collection that was carried out for this study focused on establishing the extent to which ideas about nation-building influenced the policies that underpin the current education system of the Czech Republic, as well as how participants understood the role of historical narratives that they had been taught in school in influencing their sense of being part of the Czech nation. The methodology used, and results of this data collection, are described in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This project, aimed at exploring the relationship between compulsory state education and national identity in the Czech Republic, employed a range of qualitative methods to do so. These included: semi-structured interviews (conducted in person or online) with people who had worked or been taught in the Czech state school system after 1989, analysis of key policy documents, and textbook analysis. This chapter will outline the ontological and epistemological considerations underpinning the study, as well as the methods used for data collection and the rationale behind them. The chapter has seven further sections. The first section, '4.2 Theoretical Approaches', considers the reasons for using the grounded theory methodological model. The following section, '4.3 Introducing the Three Types of Data Sources' discusses the sampling process, for participants, as well as explaining the rational for examining the particular key documents and textbooks that are analysed in 'Chapter 5' and 'Chapter 6' respectively. Section '4.4 Ethics' outlines the ethical considerations that had to be taken into account when undertaking the research and explains how ethical standards were maintained. The limitations of the research and procedural issues are discussed in section '4.5 Research Procedure'. The processes used for organizing, labelling and, coding the data for analysis in all three data sets (key documents, textbooks, and interviews) section '4.6 Coding of Primary Source Data: interview transcripts, textbooks, and Policy Documents'. Section '4.7 Validity, Reliability and Dependability' considers how the results of the research can be considered valid, reliable, and dependable, despite the fact that the study was not designed to be replicable, and is followed by a summary of this chapter in section 4.8.

4.2 Theoretical Approaches

From its conception, this study was intended to be inductive in its approach, based on the principles of grounded theory, which is "a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (Strauss and Corbyn, 1994, p. 273). It involves the collection of rich data, which can come from a range of sources, like policy documents and

interview transcripts (Charmaz, 2006), which are then analysed to inductively generate theory. Using this approach, data collection precedes the generation of theory and "involves drawing generalisable inferences out of observations" (Bryman, 2008, p. 11).

This contrasts with the deductive approach - which might be expected of research conducted in the natural sciences (Duncan, 1968) - in which a hypothesis is deduced and then "subjected to empirical scrutiny" (Bryman, 2008, p. 9). This might involve designing an experiment to test the hypothesis in question. This approach is more associated with a positivist approach that assumes a directly discoverable objective reality and claims that "science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 7). Although the clarity offered by such an approach has its advantages, it has also been criticized for failing to account for a fundamental difference between social sciences and natural sciences – the fact that humans interpret the world and act based on those interpretations (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 18). As this study is exploratory in nature and concerned with how people interpret their world and their place in it, an inductive methodological foundation was deemed more appropriate. There was a set of research questions as a basis for data collection, but there was no particular hypothesis to prove - the intention being rather to discover the relationship between compulsory education and identity formation in the Czech Republic as it is experienced by those involved in it. Having research questions in mind did not necessarily contradict the inductive nature of the approach; as Bryman points out, just as deductive studies often involve an element of induction, so inductive studies may contain elements of deduction (2008, p. 11). In this study, the deductive element comes from the experiences that led to the study's conception and guided the formulation of the research questions – it was based on the assumption that people's experience of schooling might have impacted on their view of themselves as part of the nation.

It is an important criticism of grounded theory that it ignores the theory that led to the collection of data in the first place (Silverman, 1993, p. 47). The study and its methods must have been guided by some initial theory, and so cannot be "theory neutral" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 602) – it did not emerge from a theoretical vacuum free of personal and intellectual prejudices. The research questions were based on the literature reviewed about national identity, which indicated that education plays a key role in state-

building processes. Therefore, the assumption that compulsory schooling has the potential to play an important role in the formation of a person's identity underpinned the formulation of the research questions and guided the collection of data.

The epistemological position on which this project is based is interpretive. It seeks to “grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008, p. 692) and to “understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 21). This position contrasts with the positivist epistemological standpoint, which maintains that “that the principles of inquiry embedded in physical and natural sciences may productively be applied to the study of human behaviour in society” (Gray and Williamson, 2007, p. 6). In other words, for the positivist researcher, the truth about social reality is objective and discoverable through these scientific methods and is closely related to a deductive approach (Saukko, 2003, p. 24). This position, however, becomes limited when studying phenomena such as identity, which may be constantly in flux; therefore, an approach is needed that “respects the differences between people and the objects of natural science” (Bryman. 2008, p. 16). Interpretivism provides this through its assumption that society and the individual are mutually interdependent and inseparable and there is meaning in all human action. These assumptions allow the interpretivist researcher to study “how people define events or reality” and “how they act in relation to their beliefs” (Cheniz and Swanson, 1986, p. 4). Whilst it is arguable that researchers “have an obligation to seek an objective perspective” (Rex, 1974, p. 5) on the depictions of reality that participants provide them with, an interpretivist approach was felt to be the most fitting for the purposes of this research, given the complexity and subjectivity of questions around identity, as well as the small-scale of the study.

Although certain measurable variables were quantified and compared (e.g. languages learned in school), the small sample size would provoke caution about attempting to generalise results to the wider population. It was decided that it would be more beneficial to analyse in depth the subjective experiences and opinions of those involved in the education system (whether as former students or teachers) in order to gain an understanding of how they perceived their environment (the Czech Republic), their place within it, and explore whether this point of view was connected with their experiences of the state school system.

A potential pitfall of this approach is that, in providing an account of subjective interpretations of the social world, the researcher is also adding another layer of interpretation – his or her own understanding of the subject's point of view, which will also be subjective and culturally biased. This interpretation must then be interpreted “in terms of the concepts, theory, and literature of a discipline” when presented to its intended audience (Bryman, 2008, p. 17). As Saukko points out “despite their apparent concreteness, ‘facts’ do not speak for themselves, but they have to be spoken for” (2003, p. 173). Maintaining a high degree of reflexivity, understood as “the disclosure of one’s possible bias” can, to some extent, mitigate this although it cannot entirely eliminate selectivity and bias (Cohen et. al. 2011, p. 580). Therefore, throughout the planning of this project, the position of the researcher in relationship to the subject matter and to participants (as a foreigner and fellow teacher) was taken into consideration and any conclusions drawn from the data gathered also takes this into account. It is also worth considering that the personal experiences described undergo yet another layer of interpretation any time they are read.

This multi-level interpretation of the social world becomes critical when considering the ontological orientation - i.e. “whether the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of fashioning” (Bryman, 2008, p. 4). The ontological position of the researcher in this study is constructivist; it is assumed that social reality (which includes features like the national identity of individuals and groups) does not exist as an objective and accurately measurable reality but is in fact constantly under construction and reconstruction by all of the individuals and groups which are a part of it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, pp. 109-111). The constructivist approach stands in opposition to objectivism, which posits that social phenomena exist independently of social actors (Bryman, 2008, p. 19). Although a social phenomenon, such as an education system (or any other organization) may at first appear as an objective reality within which social actors function – governed by laws that dictate who participates, what is taught, the language of instruction – however, in reality it is as much constructed by those involved in it as by its creators (Strauss, et al., 1963). Blackledge and Hunt (1985) argue that the construction of the reality of the educational and post-school environment is created by politicians and policy makers, head teachers, teachers, parents, and pupils – as well as journalists

who report on it, academics who study it and NGOs that get involved with it; it is their daily activities that shape the system within which they operate. Although they are in some ways constrained by it, their reactions to its constraints help to shape its future forms, although it becomes clear that attempts at reform are as much limited by attitudes of those within the system as people within the system are limited by it (Amnesty International, 2010, p.37). This anti-realist position has necessarily been taken, as the key object of investigation (national identity) is rarely claimed to have been defined objectively. Indeed, as Gellner points out, the very act of belonging to a nationality is a subjective one, dependent on mutual recognition of membership of the in-group (1983, p. 7).

Symbolic-interactionism also influenced the approach of this study. It is "a general theory about human behaviour, which stresses that "people define, interpret and give meaning to situations, and then behave in these situations in terms of definitions, interpretations and meanings" (Punch and Oancea, 2014, p. 157). Therefore, it is not only the actions that take place in the social world that help shape it, but it is also how people perceive and interpret these actions that determines their reactions in a continuous process. Therefore, any changes made to the education system at policy level must be interpreted at all levels, and these interpretations depend on a range of factors outside of the control of those making the changes. Likewise, the researcher and the interview form a part of this process of interaction, thereby becoming part of the phenomenon under investigation, altering it (albeit in a small way) even while it is being investigated, and once again as it is reported – this approach is tightly bound up with interpretivism. However, it is also accepted that participants have the ability "to create and maintain meaningful worlds" (Miller and Glassner, 1997, p. 102) and it is these subjective yet meaningful worlds that the interviews in this research will explore.

4.3 Introducing the Three Types of Data Sources

This section discusses how decisions were made about the nature of data collected for this study and explains the rationale for the selection of primary sources analysed (policy documents, textbooks, and information provided by participants), the different means of gathering empirical data from participants, namely interviews conducted either in person, via email exchanges, or via an

online survey tool. The first of these, '4.3.1 Key Documents', discusses how the decision was reached to focus on the following primary source documents: *Bílá kniha* [White Paper](2001) and the *'Rámcový vzdělávací program'* [RVP](2007). Section '4.3.2 Textbooks' looks at the selection of the eight textbooks which were also used as primary source documents. In the context of this study, the textbooks constitute a primary source as they are treated as a "topic" as opposed to a "resource" - the interest is in how the textbooks "function in and impact on schemes of social interaction and social organisation" (Prior, 2011, p. 95 in Silverman, D. (ed.), namely "how they project approved values and ideologies" (McCulloch, 2011, in Cohen, Manion and Morrison) - in this case those concerning national identity and belonging. These textbooks and documents used as primary data sources are freely available to the public, therefore the aspects of the study making use of these might be more easily replicable in terms of applying the same coding procedures. The final section '4.3.3 Accessing Interviewees' describes how participants were selected and contacted for participation in this study.

4.3.1 Key Documents

The decision about which policy documents to analyse was simplified by the paucity of such documents that were produced during the 1990s. As described in the literature review, the early 1990s witnessed a rapid dismantling of the ideological confines of communism in education, but this was not accompanied by a parallel implementation of new policies to replace those deemed irrelevant. The 1984 School Act remained in place, merely being modified in response to the most urgent needs, rather than overhauled and replaced. From today's perspective, it appears rather that the education system was caught up in the contemporary *zeitgeist* and subjected to the same de-regulation as many other public institutions and opened up to the forces of the free market – one of the first reforms to the 1984 act was to de-centralise education and allow the establishment of private and denominational schools, which as of 2012 account for 3% of the total number of basic schools and around one quarter of all secondary schools (MŠMT, 2012). It was not until the late 1990s that the process of educational reform began to become coherently expressed in the form of policy documents produced by MŠMT (The Ministry of Youth, Education and Sport). The *Bílá*

kniha [White Paper] (2001) was among the most significant of these early documents and formed the basis for the development of the legally binding Education Act (2004) and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program* [RVP] (Jeřábek and Tupý, 2007) that followed it. Although an earlier (2005) version of the RVP had been considered, in the end, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program* [RVP](2007) was chosen as, while it was virtually identical in content, the 2007 version contained one extra sub-section: *'8.3 Tvorba školního vzdělávacího programu v základních školách při zdravotnických zařízeních, ve školách při dětských diagnostických ústavech a ve školách při školských zařízeních pro výkon ústavní a ochranné výchovy'*[38] (Jeřábek and Tupý, 2007). It was considered that given that pupils from non-Czech, and particularly Roma backgrounds remain disproportionately likely to be educated outside of mainstream classes (Špondarová, 2008), this version might yield more insight into the mechanisms of segregation at work.

4.3.2 Textbooks

A total of eight textbooks were analysed covering grades 6-9 of basic school. The textbooks selected for analysis were history (*dějepis*) and citizenship education (*občanská výchova*) textbooks that appeared on the list of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the school year 2013-2014 (MŠMT, 2013). These subjects were chosen because history and citizenship are the two subjects that comprise the curricular area "*Člověk a společnost"*[39]*,* the area that focuses on how students orient themselves in relation to others in their society. Morgan points out that "History textbooks are seen as representations of a nation's official history as they build identity and form conceptions of morality in their readers" (2012, p. 85), and citizenship education is a means of "Encouraging citizens, particularly young people, to actively participate in social and political life" (Eurydice, 2012). In the Czech context, it appears these are the main subjects associated with the formation of a sense of national identity, given that (together with geography) they are compulsory for every Czech citizen.

On the list of approved textbooks, there is a selection of six series of

[38] Development of a School Education Programme at Elementary Schools Which Are a Part of Healthcare Facilities, at Schools Which Are a Part of Children's Diagnostic Institutions and at Schools Which Are a Part of Educational Institutions Providing Institutional Care and Care in Juvenile Correction Institutions.
[39] "Man and society".

history textbooks from different publishers, and five series of citizenship textbooks for the same age range. Schools are free to make use of any of the textbooks on the list. Those selected were all published by Fraus, which is the largest textbook manufacturer in the Czech Republic and were chosen for analysis partly for this reason and partly because only one other publisher (Nová Škola) had a full textbook series for grades 6-9 for both subjects on the MŠMT approved list. Although it is not certain that this is the case, informal discussions with teachers and booksellers pointed to the Fraus series being slightly more widely used. Unfortunately, the sixth grade citizenship textbook had been taken out of circulation, therefore 7 out of 8 of the textbooks analysed were published in 2011, the sixth grade citizenship textbook used in this study was published in 2012.

4.3.3 Accessing interviewees

For this project a series of qualitative, semi-structured interviews were carried out with a non-probability sample of teachers and former pupils of Czech primary schools. Although the preference was to have in-person interviews with all willing participants, in the end this was not possible to arrange for practical reasons. Responses therefore came from a mixture of in person interviews, email responses to the same interview schedule, and typed responses to the interview schedule via the online tool “Survey Monkey”. The questions in the interviews and online were identical. Face-to-face interviews lasted between twenty and thirty minutes. Appendices four and five includes the list of questions used during interviews with students and teachers. The sampling method used to find participants from among the population of former pupils was a combination of convenience sampling, i.e. “a sample that was selected because of its availability to the researcher” (Bryman, 2008, p. 692) with “snowball sampling” in which participants were invited to pass on information about the project to other potential participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 117). Having studied Czech language as part of an undergraduate degree, I had a range of contacts from among former teachers and friends made while travelling in the country in the two years prior to data collection as part of summer schools of Czech Language. An initial email was sent out to find out if any of them would a) be willing to participate in the research themselves; and b) be willing to pass on information about the

research to anyone who matched the criteria set. It invited them to contact me or my supervisor with any further questions or to arrange an interview. The criteria for participants in this set of interviews was simply that they must, for ethical reasons, be over eighteen years old, and must have been attending the basic stage of compulsory schooling (*základní škola*)[40] after 1989 and completed it. Sampling in this way necessarily restricts the representativeness of the sample – it meant that many of the participants were of a similar age, social class, and level of education to me, and all the participants had at least completed some form of secondary education. These selection criteria might also account for the fact that, even with the snowball sampling method, there were no Roma participants, as a significant number of Czech Roma do not complete the full nine years of *základní škola,* and a significant percentage (17%) have never been in formal education (European Agency For Fundamental Rights, 2011). Given that the stage of education in focus was the latter years of *základní škola*, this was unfortunately unavoidable. Nevertheless, this was not considered to be a major obstacle to the validity of the results due to the qualitative, inductive nature of the study. The limitations described here were somewhat mitigated by the fact that respondents came from a wide geographical area which still allowed for a broad range of perspectives, as did the fact that only two of the respondents attended the same school as each other. The breakdown of the response methods, together with basic demographic information, and our relationship prior to the commencement of the study, is given in Table 4.1:

[40] Roughly equivalent to Key Stage 1-3 in the UK system, and from primary 1 to S2 in the Scottish system.

Pseudonym	Year of birth	Gender	Town of school attendance *(základní škola)*	Method of response	Known to researcher prior to the study?
Simon	1993	Male	Bouzov	Interview	Yes (friend)
Jan	1981	Male	Blansko	Questionnaire Return	No
Petr	1991	Male	Unknown rural school	Interview	No
Michal	1988	Male	Uherské Hradiště	Interview	Yes (friend)
Julie	1989	Female	Nový Jičín	Interview	Yes (friend)
Natalie	1992	Female	Dřevohostice	Interview	No
Lucie	1991	Female	Ostrava	Interview	Yes (friend)
Barbora	1985	Female	Kolín	Interview	Yes (friend)
Anna	1990	Female	Liberec	Questionnaire Return	No
Vera	1988	Female	Chrudim/Pardubice	Questionnaire Return	Yes (friend)
Daniela	1991	Female	Kolín	Questionnaire Return	No
Darja	1994	Female	Unknown rural school, South Moravia	Interview	No

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of student participants

It was decided that to obtain a fuller picture of the changes in the Czech education system, those entrusted with the implementation of those changes – teachers and head teachers – should also be represented. As the project is focused on the compulsory education at *základní škola,* interviews were conducted with teachers from this group. As none were personally known to the researcher, a call for participants was placed in the online newspaper *Britské Listy*, which is generally considered to be a liberal, left-wing publication. This necessarily restricted respondents to the readership of this website (although the call was also shared on social media, so might have in fact reached others who might not otherwise have seen it). To mitigate this bias, some interviews were also arranged as a result of contacts made during the student interviews. The call for participants generated a large number of responses, but out of those who were willing and eager to share their views and contribute to the project only a relatively small number met the desired criteria of having worked in a *základní škola* for at least five years since 1989.

Part of the initial research design was to have a balance of those who had been educated in rural and urban environments. However, the sampling method could not guarantee this, therefore the majority of respondents happen to be from smaller cities as well as towns and villages. Prague was unfortunately unrepresented. Twice as many females as males were interviewed in the student group, and all of the teachers interviewed were female. It was not deemed necessary to try to rectify this imbalance, given that "There are significantly more female than male teachers at primary education level in all [EU] Member States. In 2011, 85% of primary education teachers in the EU27 were women, with the highest percentages in the Czech Republic and Slovenia (both 97%)" (Eurostat, 2014). If the pool of respondents from among the student population had been overwhelmingly male or female, then some steps may have been taken to redress this in the interests of fairness, if not representativeness. Demographic information for this group of participants, and the method of response used are given in the following table:

Pseudonym	**Role**	**Years of experience**	**Location**	**Method of response**	**Known to researcher prior to the study?**
Jana	Primary school teacher	11	Dědčin	Questionnaire Return	No
Petra	Primary school teacher (2nd stage)	30	Brno	Questionnaire Return	No
Diana	Primary school music teacher	30	Brno	Email exchange	No
Helena	Headteacher	19	Bouzov	Email exchange	No
Sabrina	Retired teacher	27	Unknown	Email exchange	No
Tereza	Primary school teacher	26	Chomutov	Interview	No
Janina	Primary school teacher	28	Prague	Interview	No

Table 4.2 Demographic Information of Teacher Participants

The calls for participants were issued in Czech, firstly in order to generate a higher number of responses, and secondly to ensure that the sample, although not representative of the Czech population as a whole, would not be solely restricted to those who spoke English. These calls, with their translations, are provided in Appendices 1 and 2. Conducting the interviews using email

exchanges and a web-based questionnaire tool, as well as face-to-face, was necessary in order not to lose out on potentially insightful information from willing participants due to practical limitations, which are outlined in detail in section 4.5.3.

The interview schedule was identical for each group, regardless of whether the interview was conducted online or in person. The aim was to allow for unstructured responses that allowed participants “to have the freedom to give their own answer as fully as they choose rather than being constrained in some way by the nature of the question.” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 359). However, it is possible that the format of the method of data collection acted as a constraint in itself. Notably, in the face-to-face interviews, it was possible to ask participants to expand upon or clarify a particular point, through “prompts” and “probes” (Morrison, 1993, p. 66) whereas in the email exchanges, which this was theoretically possible, the rapport established in the interview setting made this a more useful tool. Nevertheless, the email responses were generally expansive and detailed. The online interview format was adopted in order to widen the pool of participants through “snowball sampling”, due to the relative ease of sharing the interview questions through a weblink. The questions were administered using the online tool “Survey Monkey”, which allowed respondents to type answers free form, allowing for unstructured responses, and did not limit the amount that participants were able to write. This approach was considered suitable for the complexity of the information sought (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 321). However, in practice, the participants who responded through the questionnaire sometimes provided briefer answers than those participants who had personal contact with the researcher, either in person or via email.

4.4 Ethics

Conducting interviews requires that participants' basic rights and privacy are respected, and that the interview process causes them as little inconvenience as possible. A key ethical consideration is that of informed consent. All participants had to be over eighteen years of age to be considered capable of giving such consent. For the interviews, a Plain Language Statement and consent form (Appendix 3) were provided to all potential participants, which outlined the nature and purpose of the research. After having time to read this

and ask any questions, participants were then asked to sign the Interview Consent Form prior to the interview taking place. All participants were offered the option of a version of these documents translated into Czech, but they could all read English well enough to understand and agree to take part, even if their preference was to have the interviews conducted in Czech.

Anonymity was guaranteed to participants in the consent form in order to protect participants' privacy. Identifying markers have been removed as far as possible. All data collected (written or recorded) for this project has been stored on a password protected computer. Participants were assured that data would be kept only until the completion of the project, then would be deleted. They were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any time prior to its submission.

As a student of Czech language and culture, and as a teacher, it was important for the researcher to maintain an awareness of personal views and prejudices through the process of designing and conducting the research, taking care that this did not bias my approach. An example of this occurred when considering whether to include a question in the interview schedule on the "*romská otázka*" (the Roma question). Reading for previous research and the literature review had uncovered what appears to be incontrovertible evidence of widespread, systematic discrimination against Roma children in the Czech Republic's education system (see for example: Roma Education Fund, 2011; Amnesty International, 2010). This appeared to be a central issue in questions regarding Czech education Czech identity and out-group exclusion. However, it was decided upon reflection, knowing the strength of feeling that can accompany such discussions, that it would be best left out of the interview schedules and only brought up if the participants decided that it was an issue worth mentioning, as its omission would be almost equally informative as its inclusion. A major factor in this decision was that whilst interviewing strangers in a foreign language and an unfamiliar setting, the researcher did not wish to find herself agreeing with objectionable points of view (from her own perspective) out of politeness or uncertainty, nor engaged in attempting to talk people out of their deeply held beliefs.

It was felt that insider knowledge of the teaching profession offered some advantage when interviewing teachers, as it provided an awareness of some of the pressures faced by this group, thereby enabling the researcher to empathise with participants. This helped to build trust and had an overall

positive effect on the quality of data gathered from interviews. However, the "researcher effect" – where the subjective position of the researcher impacts on the design, conduct, and reporting of results – should not be ignored either. This effect might also have come into play during the interviews with students, as participants had varying degrees of social ties towards the researcher which may have exacerbated the imbalance of power that is present in a research situation. Overall, however, the fact that the researcher was known and trusted by this group, even if only slightly, appeared to have a positive effect on the information gathered and the frankness of respondents' answers. The initial design of this project was approved by the College of Arts ethics committee at the University of Glasgow.

4.5 Research Procedure

This section outlines the procedures used for collecting data from the different primary sources of empirical data. It describes the selection and analysis of policy documents and textbooks in sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 respectively. Section 4.5.3 outlines the interview process for both the in-person and online interviews.

4.5.1 Document Analysis

Once the documents *Bílá kniha* [White Paper](2001) and *Rámcový vzdělávací program* [RVP](2007) (had been selected, they were subjected to a thematic analysis. This type of analysis, based on a constructivist perspective, assumes that language is a factor that shapes social realities, rather than merely reporting them. As well as considering the content of the document, the rhetoric employed, and the prioritisation of issues were also be analysed. The purpose of this was to examine, at the level of policy, the ways in which education may contribute towards pupils' senses of identities and belonging, as well as promoting positive attitudes towards others.

After several readings, these documents were coded in much the same way as the interview transcripts, although rather than adopting a line-by-line approach, which would have been unnecessarily exhaustive, this was instead carried out per paragraph, where each one was assigned one or two codes, which were then grouped into themes. For the *Bílá kniha*[White Paper], these

were: the aims of the paper; the goals of education envisioned in the paper; the form and content of compulsory schooling in the paper; and inclusion and equality in the white paper. It also considers what the overall structure of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] reveals about the priorities of Czech policy makers at the time of its production. When the *Rámcový vzdělavací program* [RVP] was coded in the same way, different themes emerged, namely: language learning, developing national consciousness, multi-cultural education, and approaches to equality and inclusion. Analysis of this document will also take into account what its structure and organization suggest about the priorities of those who developed it.

4.5.2 Textbook Analysis

The importance of textbooks in transmitting cultural knowledge is often alluded to, yet methodological guidelines for their analysis are still somewhat scarce (Nichols, 2003). For this study, a total of eight textbooks were analysed covering grades 6-9 of basic school. The textbooks selected for analysis were history *(dějepis)* and citizenship education *(občanská výchova)* textbooks that appeared on the list of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the school year 2013-2014 (MŠMT, 2013). The textbook analysis procedure consisted of an initial reading of the textbooks to identify the structure and approach that they used, followed by a close reading of the textbooks in the order that they were intended to be studied (i.e. beginning with the sixth grade, ending with the ninth). This was done first with the history textbooks, then the citizenship ones. Each page was labelled with one or more codes, which were later organised into themes. Finally, the series were compared with each other to provide a comprehensive overview of the curriculum heading *"Člověk a jeho svět"*[41].

Due to the specific purpose of textbooks and their visual complexity, their analysis requires a more multi-faceted approach than the thematic analysis that was applied to the relevant policy documents. The process of analysing the textbooks used here is based on a five-dimensional model developed by Morgan and Henning (2011) specifically for the analysis of

[41] "Man and his World".

history textbooks, which involves looking at the textbook as a whole unit, rather than simply analysing the content. The five points are as follows:

- The books' approaches to historical knowledge and the role of pupils in receiving or creating that knowledge
- looking at how the books attempt encourage empathy in pupils
- situating the textbook in its contemporary social and political context to see how it maybe “used”
- the narrative of the past constructed by the textbooks
- the layout and design of the textbooks.

This model is particularly useful, as it allows for the analysis of what values are *assumed* by the textbook in addition to the visible and explicit pedagogical content. It also allows for a clearer view of the “spaces between” what is said and what is unsaid, which is especially useful in considering the role history education has been assumed to play in “enforced forgetting” (Sayer, 1998, p. 269).

The process for analysing and coding data began with an overview of all eight textbooks, making notes on emergent themes. As this resulted in a large mass of unorganised data, in order to reduce and abstract it, it was decided to focus on material that specifically pertained to the aims of “Man and His World” in the RVP. The aims as set out were also broad and overlapped significantly with each other, so these were first simplified and reduced down to four categories: personal values, skills development, identity and orientation, and approach to history (i.e. whether it is presented as a chronological narrative or organised by themes).

An additional category was devised for information about national minorities, a category that was considered critical in the 2002 textbook review, is raised in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], but is not expressly referred to in the *Rámcový vzdělavací program* [RVP]. The lack of explicit reference to particular ethnic groups and national minorities in the *Rámcový vzdělavací program* [RVP] is in itself worth considering. By removing reference to specific ethnic groups, particularly those who are disadvantaged or discriminated against, the document allows for the inclusion of a wider range of backgrounds

to be considered entitled to extra support based on their circumstances rather than ethnic origin, but might also contribute to their marginalisation by rendering them invisible.

4.5.3 Interview Procedure

After the sampling methodology had been decided upon within the limitations of the project, an informal invitation to take part in the research was sent to contacts of the researcher who matched the criteria set regarding age and education. Those who responded positively were asked if they would pass on the invitation to others of their acquaintance who also met the desired criteria. This was done in order to expand the sample beyond those with a direct personal connection to the researcher, by making use of informal networks (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 117). This proved successful and increased the pool of respondents by around 50%. The process of negotiating times and locations for interviews began. Three interviews were conducted in Glasgow with Czech students who were studying in the city on an Erasmus exchange. The rest took place in the Czech Republic in the town or city where the respondent lives, at a location of their choice. In every case this was a local café or bar.

Sourcing participants for the second group of interviewees (teachers) was through a call for participants in *Britské listy*, as outlined previously in the description of sampling methods. All responses to this call were entered into a spreadsheet and then colour coded to indicate how well they matched the set criteria, the warmth of their response and the likelihood of being able to meet for a face-to-face interview. All respondents were sent a reply thanking them for their interest in the project and inviting the most suitable respondents to arrange an interview time within the period that I would be in the Czech Republic. Specific times proved somewhat difficult to arrange, but it was possible to arrange several in the given time frame. These interviews were conducted in the workplaces of the respondents in the towns in which they live. The calls for participants for both the student and teacher groups can be viewed in Appendices 1 and 2.

The interviews were semi-structured and the interview schedules were used as a guide, with respondents encouraged to expand on their answers

and discuss related issues that they saw as relevant. This format is very useful for seeking subjective, detailed description, and is flexible enough to allow for deeper exploration of interesting topics that arise, thanks to the opportunity to change the form and ordering of the questions (Brinkman and Kvale, 2009, p. 124). However, perhaps because of a willingness to be helpful, almost all participants answered all the questions on the schedule, with most of them checking that they had provided enough detail! I was able to establish a good rapport quickly with all respondents, possibly because of earlier email communication which served as an introduction or because I was known to some of the participants either as a friend or a "friend of a friend". Nevertheless, all participants were reminded at the beginning of the interviews about their rights to anonymity and to withdraw before being offered a chance to read the Statement for Participants and clarify any points that were unclear or that they did not understand. They were then asked to read and sign the consent form before the interviews commenced.

In the cases where the interviews were not able to be conducted in person, the consent forms were sent as an email attachment or as an addendum to the online questionnaire, which had to be read and agreed to before the questions could be answered. Using online interviews had the advantage of being immediately ready for analysis, but lacked the rich, descriptive detail that the in-person interviews were able to provide , as it was not possible to use tone or body language to prompt and facilitate the conversation (Brinkman and Kvale, 2009, p. 149).

In total, 12 former students of the Czech state-school system participated in the study, and 7 teachers (including one head teacher and one retired teacher). To ensure anonymity, each respondent will be referred to by a pseudonym. All participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any time (Siedman, 2006, p. 80). My email address and that of my supervisor was provided in case they should have questions or wish to withdraw. The interviews were mainly conducted in Czech, except for four of the student interviews undertaken with fluent English speakers. Those conducted online were all in Czech. The interview schedules can be accessed in Appendices 4 and 5. For the sake of accuracy, in subsequent chapters interview quotations are presented in the language each particular interview was conducted in.

At the beginning of each interview all participants were asked a series

of questions to obtain basic demographic information. For the student participants, this included age, gender, and the name of the city, town, or village in which they had attended *základní škola.* For the teachers, this included questions about their career history (e.g. how long they had been teaching and in what positions) and the locations in which they had taught. This information is provided in tables 4.1 ("Demographic Information of Student Participants) and 4.2 ("Demographic Information of Teacher Participants")Following questions about demographic information, both the student and teacher groups answered the same set of questions as the student group regarding their personal level of identification with a national and ethnic group, as well as their thoughts on about Czech identity more generally, before moving on to questions that pertained directly to education. The interview schedule was piloted with a Czech speaker who did not participate in the study (as they did not fit the selection criteria) to ensure that the questions and their order were sensible and worked well to allow participants to talk (or write) freely about their experiences and opinions.

After the interviews were completed, the interviews were transcribed, and all participants names replaced by a pseudonym. The interviews lasted on average around 20 minutes, totalling just over four hours of recorded material. When transcribed amounted to 82 A4 pages of 1.5 line-spaced text in 10-point font. Each line of interview transcript was labelled and coded and analysed using a grounded theory approach, the process and rationale for which is discussed below.

4.6 Coding of Primary Source Data: Interview Transcripts, Textbooks, and Policy Documents

Codes in qualitative research are used to "*Label, separate, compile* and *organize* data" (Charmaz, 1983, p.186). In order to interpret the data from both sets of interviews, the data collected in the form of interview transcripts was coded using a thematic analysis approach. The analysis of the codes generated out of the thematic analysis is based on a grounded theory approach to the generation of theory out of the data contained in the primary sources. Grounded theory "aims to generate theory out of research data by achieving a close fit between the two" (Bryman 2008, p. 694). The codes were then used to organise the data into categories which will be discussed in

relation to the research questions in the “Findings and Discussion” chapters. In each case, the language used in the discussion of these themes will be analysed alongside the content using a combination of a qualitative content analysis approach, which emphasises emergence of categories from the data (Bryman, 2008, p. 697). Unlike conversation analysis, this approach does not take into account such features of the interviews as pauses and their length, tone of voice etc., instead focusing on the words and phrases used. This is partly due to the fact that some of the interviews had to be conducted online, making this type of analysis impossible, but it was also decided that such a forensic level of analysis was not necessary for the purposes of this project. The theory generated by the research is substantive in nature - i.e. relating to this empirical instance (how the experiences of the Czech education system during the early transformation period have impacted on participants' national identity) rather than a more generalisable formal theory about the effect of education on national identity (Bryman, 2008, p. 544).

Thematic analysis involves first of all labelling the data, followed by the organisation of the data into categories which can then be compared and contrasted in order to help generate meaningful theories out of the data gathered. In this case, the two main categories of respondent emerged, and the data was arranged and analysed accordingly. These were: Category A - those who felt that being Czech was a very or somewhat important part of their identity; and Category B – those who felt that being Czech was a minor or unimportant part of their identity. Which category respondents belonged to was determined by their response to the question on the interview schedule (which all participants were asked to answer: *“Jak důležité je, osobně pro Vás, být Čech/Češka?”*[42]. If their response was *“Není důležité“, “beru to jako fakt“ „Stejně důležité, jako bych byla Italkou, kdybych se narodila v Itálii”*[43]or similar, they were placed in Category A. If they answered along the lines of “*Velmi důležité*” or “*Je to pro mě důležité. Ale nijak radikálně”*[44]*,* they were placed in Category B. As in response to other questions, there was a great deal of variety in the responses to this question among the student group, which shall be discussed in more detail in the analysis chapter. However, due

[42] *“*How important is it for you personally to be Czech?”.
[43] “Not important”, “I accept it as a fact”, “Just as important as being Italian would be if I were born in Italy”.
[44] *“*Very important*”/* “It is important, but not radically so*”.*

to the even smaller sample size of the teacher group, and the high it was more difficult to draw meaningful comparisons between the categories for this group – especially given that there was a high level of agreement among respondents' feelings in relation to the changes in Czech schools and society. Nevertheless, categorising respondents in this way allows for more meaningful comparisons of the data than simply describing the codes and organising the data arbitrarily.

Owing to the multi-modal nature of this study, the codes developed in the process of analysing the key documents were not able to be used in quite the same way – there was no basis for categorising the data for meaningful comparison. However, what the collection of data from a range of sources did allow was for each round of coding to inform the subsequent ones. Therefore, the themes that emerged in the interviews to some extent informed the organisation of data from the key documents and textbooks and allowed each set of data to be analysed in its wider context. Due to the specific purpose of textbooks and their visual complexity, their analysis requires a more multi-faceted approach than the critical content analysis that was applied to the relevant policy documents.

The process of analysing the textbooks used here is based on the above described five-dimensional model developed by Morgan and Henning (2011) specifically for the analysis of history textbooks, which involves looking at the textbook as a whole unit, rather than simply analysing the content. This model is particularly useful, as it allows for the analysis of what values are *assumed* by the textbook in addition to the visible and explicit pedagogical content. The five point model may be lacking in the nuanced analysis of language made possible by critical discourse analysis (Maposa, 2015), but as Mackenzie and Steinberg's (2015) use of the model to analyse the use of assessment tasks in history textbooks shows, it is capable of allowing detailed and wide-ranging analysis. This model was adapted for analysing the citizenship textbooks by considering the books' approach to citizenship in place of their approach to history. The process for analysing and coding data began with an overview of all eight textbooks, first history, then citizenship, making notes on emergent themes. As this resulted in a large mass of unorganised data, in order to reduce and abstract it, it was decided to focus

on material that specifically pertained to the aims of "*Člověk a jého svět*"[45] in the *Ramcové vydělavácí program* [RVP][46]

An additional category was devised for information about national minorities, a category that was considered critical in the 2002 textbook review (Projekt varianty, 2002), is raised in the *Bílá kniha*, but is not expressly referred to in the RVP. The lack of explicit reference to particular ethnic groups and national minorities, particularly those who are disadvantaged or discriminated against, allows for the inclusion of a wider range of backgrounds to be considered entitled to extra support based on their circumstances rather than ethnic origin. However, it could also be argued that this ignores the specific requirements that some pupils might have that are linked to their ethnic, linguistic, or religious background. This echoes the position of the communist authorities towards the Roma community; they were subject to a policy of assimilation, therefore denying them the benefits that other minorities (for example Poles) were able to access. Although the circumstances are different, as Roma are now an officially recognised minority and have certain rights and protections, removing reference to all ethnic groups eliminates the obligation for the RVP, and by extension the textbooks based on it, to address discrimination towards particular groups. Including this additional category allows for the representation of national minorities in the textbooks to be analysed in relation to the goals of the RVP, as it is implied but not made explicit in the document.

4.7 Validity, Reliability and Dependability

In qualitative research, although the type of systematic rigour that characterises quantitative research is difficult or impossible to achieve, there are nevertheless steps that can be taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The validity of qualitative research can be internal or external. External validity refers to "the degree to which a researcher's observations can be accurately compared to those of other groups" (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 135 in O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 197). However, as the theory generated by this study is intended to be substantive in nature, this is not a concern. Of far greater importance is internal validity, that is "how the findings of a study capture

[45] "Man and his World".
[46] Framework Educational Programme.

reality” (Merriam 1988, p. 166 in O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 196). Several steps were taken to ensure that the findings of this study accurately reflected the reality presented by participants.

Firstly, the choice of which language the interviews took place in (Czech or English) was left to the participants' choice. Not only did this ensure that the choice of participants was not limited to English speakers, but it ensured that the responses were not restricted by (real or perceived) level of competence in a foreign language. Secondly, the guarantee of anonymity to participants ensured that they were able to speak freely without fear of reprisal or repercussion for expressing controversial opinions. To enable the researcher to conduct some member-checking (where the researcher contacts interviewees at a later date to double check that the representation of their words was accurate), contact details were retained for all participants and member-checking carried out on a small, random sample. Finally, to ensure the validity of the codes generated in the thematic analysis, a random sample of transcripts was given to a colleague studying in the faculty of social science (who also knows Czech) to ensure that similar themes were identified in the interviews, thereby reducing the bias of having data interpreted from only one person's perspective.

The notion of reliability generally refers to the replicability of the study, meaning that if it was to be conducted again by another researcher, would it yield the same or similar results (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 197). As the results would be largely dependent on the sample of participants, which could not be replicated, O'Donoghue suggests that in studies like this, *dependability* is a better measure of rigour that should enable the reader to “concur with the research findings, taking into consideration the data collected” (ibid.). This can be achieved through transparent, detailed description of the research process, and presenting sample research materials (such as interview schedules) in appendices. Other steps taken to ensure the dependability of this study were: to record interviews so that the originals could be referred to at any time during analysis, rather than relying on notes; using the same interview schedule for all participants in each of the two groups (students and teachers); and personally conducting all of the interviews to ensure consistency. However, the researcher’s interpretation would be unique in every case, meaning that the conclusions drawn from the same primary sources still have the potential to vary widely.

4.8 Summary

This chapter began by outlining the ontological and epistemological position of this study in section ‘4.2 Theoretical Approaches’ which explained why an inductive, interpretive approach based on grounded theory was deemed most suitable for exploring how experiences of schooling in the Czech Republic might play a part in the construction of national identities. Section 4.3 ‘Introducing the Three Types of Data Sources’ went on to describe the process for selecting the primary data sources used in the study, namely: the policy documents and textbooks analysed and the people who took part. This included the methods used to contact potential participants, their demographic information, and the different ways the interviews were carried out – in person or online. This was followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations of the study in section ‘4.4 Ethics’, which described the steps taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethically sound manner, including the use of consent forms and plain language statements. In section 4.5, the research procedure, limiting factors, and the steps taken to mitigate their impact on the overall quality of the study were described. Next, the procedure for coding data gathered from all primary sources was outlined in Section 4.6, which described how thematic analysis was employed to enable the comparison of data collected through interviews, and to identify the major themes that emerged in the policy documents and textbooks analysed. Finally, the measures taken to ensure that the study’s methods were reliable and dependable were described, and internal validity maintained so that the study represents a faithful account and transparent interpretation of the data gathered.

Chapter 5 Key Document Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section analyses the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] (2001), which was the first major education policy document produced in the Czech Republic following the "deconstruction" of the communist system during the 1990s. It outlines the context of the paper's production and its aims in section 5.2.1, before describing the paper's content and structure in section 5.2.2. Section 5.2.3 discusses what the paper's authors consider to be the main purposes of education and the strategies they suggest for achieving these ends. The following section, 5.2.4, discusses the paper's vision for reforms to *základní škola*[47], the compulsory stage of schooling for all Czech citizens. Approaches for promoting inclusion and equality proposed in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] are discussed in section 5.2.5, followed by a reflection on the paper and its impact in section 5.2.6.

The second half of the chapter looks at the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [48][RVP] (2007). Section 5.3.1 examines the aims and objectives of basic education as described in the document. The next section, 5.3.2, considers the subjects offered, and their classification, framing, and prioritisation in the school system. Section 5.3.3 follows with an in-depth look at the curricular content promotes values and citizenship through the study of history and citizenship studies. This section also contains sub-sections that discuss approaches to inclusion and multicultural education. The sub-chapter concludes with some general observations and reflections on the document in section 5.4.

Both documents were analysed using thematic analysis to classify the major themes that emerged, such as: how they portray the purposes of education; the specific approaches to history and citizenship education that they advocate; and approaches to educational diversity and inclusion. As well as considering the content of the documents, this chapter also reflects on rhetoric employed in these policy documents, and what their structures reveal about the prioritisation of issues pertaining to identity and equality throughout the education system. In doing so, it reveals the extent to which ideas about

[47] Basic education.
[48] Framework Programme for Basic Education.

nationality and nation-building influenced the reform of Czech education at the level of policy development. Finally, it considers how changes to education policies may contribute towards pupils' sense of identity and belonging, as well as influencing attitudes towards Others. Having examined the content of both the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program* [RVP] in some detail, the concluding section of this chapter answers, with reference to these documents, the first of the central research questions that this thesis is addressing, namely: *"In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?"*

5.2 *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] (2001)

This section looks at the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] in detail in order to explore the policy direction of Czech Education as the country prepared to join the EU in 2004. It considers the role education was thought to play in shaping the national culture and promoting harmonious relations with Others, both inside and outside the state's borders.

5.2.1 Context and Aims of the *Bílá kniha [White Paper]* (2001)

In the early 1990s, education reform was taking place alongside political transformation and economic "shock therapy" both of which constituted major changes in the country, as party politics, privatization and liberal economies became embedded (Hamm, et al., 2012; Fawn, 2000). During this time, the Czech education system was considered to be one of the country's great assets and the level of techinical experitse in the country was high (Fawn, 2000, p.86), and whilst education was seen as important it was perhaps a less pertinent issue than political and economic reform. As a result, the changes that took place focused on "the de-ideologisation of the legal documents, including curricula programmes, and de-monopolization of state education" (Greger and Walterová, 2007, p. 15) to create an environment in which a new system could be built. As a result, over a decade passed before the development of new national policy documents on the subject. However, issues of social cohesion, identity, and future competitiveness in the global economy all depend on an education system that is fit for purpose. The outdatedness of a Schools Act formulated during the communist period was

thrown into sharp relief as the Czech Republic moved towards EU membership. Prospective EU membership acted as a catalyst for educational reform (Greger and Walterová, 2007). Whilst the principle of subsidiarity in the EU *"stanoví plnou odpovědnost členských států za obsah výuky a organizaci vzdělávacích systémů"*[49] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 30), the European Parliament has the power to act to combat discrimination in all areas, including education (European Union, 1997). This meant that among other things, Czech education had to move towards eliminating the discrimination against Roma pupils that had long been a feature of the system.

The introduction to the White Paper sets out the overall aims of the paper itself. It was conceived as a *"systémový projekt, formulující myšlenková východiska, obecné záměry a rozvojové programy, které mají být směrodatné pro vývoj vzdělávací soustavy ve střednědobém horizontu"*[50] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 7). In conjunction with the Education Bill that was drawn up concurrently with the White Paper, it was to *"ovlivňovat rozhodování na úrovni krajů, obcí i veřejných vysokých škol, ale také sjednocovat úsilí o rozvoj vzdělanosti ze strany sociálních partnerů a zájmových skupin občanské společnosti"*[51] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8). This recognises that there is a wide range of stakeholders invested in national education systems, from those with a "pecuniary interest" who expect to profit from an educated workforce, to those who believe it should serve the "national interest" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 85). In a democratic system they can all expect to have a say in its reform. It is emphasised that the "*Dokument usiluje o to, aby vyjadřoval celospolečenské potřeby, nikoli jen skupinové či stranicko-politické zájmy"*[52] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8), emphasizing the desirability of a de-politicised school system. However, the extent to which this is possible is questionable, as education is "used and misused to generate a citizenship with characteristics necessary for the political and economic survival of that regime" (Hornát, 2019, p. 272). The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] also deals with the integration of the education system *"ve své sociální, kulturní, politické,*

[49] "proclaims the full responsibility of member states for the content of education and the organisation of education system" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 32).
[50] "a systemic project formulating intellectual basis, general goals and development programmes of the education system in the medium term" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 7).
[51] "influence decision-making on central, regional and municipal levels and even within higher education institutions, but also integrate efforts to develop education by social partners and interested groups of civic society" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8).
[52] "The document aims to express the needs of society as a whole, not only particular or political party interests" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8).

hospodářské a environmentální podmíněnosti"[53] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8), acknowledging the symbiotic relationship education has with all of these different contexts, and therefore its central role in shaping society (Gellner, 1983, p. 29). The apparent contradiction between the need for education to be protected from transient political influences in order to benefit the wider society, yet integrate into all of these components, is not addressed in the document. However, the fact that no need is felt to discuss this betrays an assumption by the authors of a general consensus regarding the political and economic orientation of the Czech Republic. This consensus was mirrored by remarkable agreement on the importance of the swift application of market reforms in post-communist states by Western observers (OECD, 1996). What is important here is that it was on the basis of this assumption – that the Czech Republic would be a liberal capitalist democracy - that the education system was to be reformed. Its Western orientation is confirmed with the statement: "*Poněvadž česká vzdělávací politika bude podstatně ovlivňována mezinárodním kontextem, formulují se záměry mezinárodní spolupráce v oblasti vzdělávání, s důrazem na začlenění do evropských a atlantických struktur."*[54] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8). This demonstrates the belief held, at least by those in power, that reforming the education system for the future Czech society should support the nation's integration to these structures.

The consultative nature of producing the document is stressed in the introduction, tempering the fact that its production signals a retaking of the reins by government bodies. Seeking out the views of schools and teachers (MŠMT, 2001, p. 6) signifies that the process of creating the document was mutually negotiated, rather than centrally dictated basis for reform. The input received from the pedagogical faculty at Charles University is also acknowledged, not only demonstrating the research basis for the proposed changes, but also situating them in a national context. The gradual nature of the changes is also highlighted. The time scale envisaged for the changes *"je rok 2005, v některých jeho částech s potřebným zřetelem k období do roku 2010"*[55] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8). The introduction also stresses that "The

[53] "into their social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental context" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8).
[54] "Since Czech educational policy will be heavily influenced by the international context, the aims of inter- national co-operation in the field of education are outlined, and involvement in European and Atlantic structures is stressed (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8).
[55] "*extends to 2005, in some parts even to 2010*" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8).

recommendations and measures proposed in this document should not be seen as a single impending reform, but as a *"program dlouhodobého, postupně uskutečňovaného, procesu proměny českého vzdělávání"*[56] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 9). Whilst this supports the notion that the document is a guide for improvement rather than a diktat for reform, this cautious language implies there is little sense of urgency to implement the proposed changes, thereby potentially limiting the impact of the paper on educational practices.

5.2.2 Overall structure of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]

The White Paper consists of four main chapters exclusive of the introduction and conclusion. The first of these, entitled *"Východiska a předpoklady rozvoje vzdělávací soustavy"*[57] provides a rational for reform and sets out its goals. This section of the document will be analysed in greater detail in section 5.2.3 "Goals of Education and Strategies for Reform". The next three sections deal with different stages of education chronologically – school (II), tertiary (III) and adult education (IV). Section II deals with pre-school, basic school (roughly equivalent to primary and lower secondary in Scotland), and secondary education sectors. If allocation of space in the document may be considered indicative of each sector's relative perceived importance to achieving the White Paper's overall objectives, then the school sector - and basic education in particular - occupies prime position. School education accounts for twenty percent of the document's contents, and *základní vzdělávání*[58] two percent on its own. This is perhaps to be expected, as it is the only compulsory phase of education, and therefore the sector over which centralised authorities exercise most control. Tertiary education is next in terms of allotted space - and by inference relative importance – with ten percent of the document devoted to discussing this sector. Again, this is unsurprising given its importance for training skilled workers and innovators. The inclusion of adult education – a sector for which no formal structures were in place at all – demonstrates an awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning, but also perhaps indicates that the workforce of the future might need more frequent re-training than in the past. It is also the sector whose development was promoted by the European

[56] "a programme of long-range, gradually implemented process of transformation" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 9).
[57] "Starting Points and Preconditions for the Development of Education".
[58] Basic education.

Union as “an essential policy strategy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion, employment and for individual fulfilment” (Williams and Williams, 2016, p. 237) This is in keeping with the observation that capitalist economies (unstable by nature) rely on a flexible, trainable workforce to a greater extent than more managed economic systems (Olssen, 2006; Bernstein, 2000, pp. 73-74).

5.2.3 Goals of Education and Strategies for Reform

The first main chapter of the White Paper locates the process of reform in its philosophical (*“Obecné cíle vzdělávání a výchovy”*[59]), political (*“Proměny společnosti a principy vzdělávací politiky*” and *“Řízení a financování vzdělávací soustavy v nových podmínkách”*[60]*)*, and aspirational contexts (*“Prognóza kvantitativního vývoje vzdělávací soustavy*” and *“Evropská a mezinárodní spolupráce ve vzdělávání”*[61]). Rather than treat each of these sections distinctly, the contents of this chapter will be analysed as a whole in order to reveal how the paper’s authors saw the function of education in Czech society at the time, how they envisioned it developing, and what potential barriers to reform they anticipated.

Reform of the education system does not necessarily rely on a consensus of values or about the overall function of education for a society. A lack of consensus is evident throughout the White Paper as it alternately emphasizes the role that education can have in helping individuals attain personal fulfilment through “*Rozvoj lidské individuality”*[62] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14),but at the same time, it is also promoted as the path to a more equal society through *“posilování soudržnosti společnosti”*[63] (ibid.). Although these two aims are not necessarily mutually exclusive, for individual personal development to align with the needs of the society relies upon the existence of common culture (Anderson, 2006, p. 197). Education is also tasked with

[59] “General Aims of Education”.
[60] “The Transformation of Society and the Principles of Educational Policy” and “Management and Financing of the Education System under New Conditions”.
[61] “The Forecast of Growth of the Education system” and “European and International Co-operation in Education”.
[62] “The development of human personality” (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14) Here the Czech word *“individualita”* is translated to “personality” in the English version, instead of the more usual “individuality”.
[63] “strengthening social cohesiveness”.

"Zprostředkování historicky vzniklé kultury společnosti"[64] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14), as well as mitigating *"nerovností sociálního a kulturního prostředí i všech znevýhodnění daných zdravotními, etnickými či specificky regionálními důvody"*[65] (ibid.). It is also responsible for *"[podpora] demokratických a tolerantních postojů ke všem členům společnosti bez rozdílu"*[66] (ibid.), *"Zvyšování zaměstnatelnosti"*[67] (ibid.) and *"Zvyšování konkurenceschopnosti ekonomiky a prosperity společnosti"*[68] (ibid.).The breadth and ambition of these aims echoes Komenský's utopian ideal that humanity was ultimately perfectible through education (Comenius, 1967, p. 117). At the very least, it demonstrates a belief that education has the potential to be fundamental to the wellbeing of both the individual and the society, but once again this relies on congruence of aims (Gellner, 1983, p. 111).

In relation to historical education, the paper raises the question *"Jak vypěstovat otevřenost ke změně a dokázat přitom předat bohatství minulosti, nebo jak propojit novou evropskou dimenzi s národními tradicemi?"*[69] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 19). This reveals an apparent tension between the national and European approaches to education, as well as a perceived need to protect the national culture in an integrated Europe. The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], however, does not suggest nor dictate any particular approach to this, but rather leaves it as a question, something to be dealt with in future. Indeed, the role of education in transmitting the national culture is somewhat downplayed throughout the document. Where it arises as a specific issue it is generally paired with reference to education for democratic citizenship and multicultural education (MŠMT, 2001, p. 15 and p. 95). Indeed, the term *"národ"* itself is used relatively sparingly throughout the document, with *"společnost"* occurring more regularly[70]. Interestingly, this is reversed in the English language version of the document[71], which gives the impression of a more intentionally

[64] "Transmission of the historically evolved culture of the society" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14).
[65] "all disadvantages caused my health, ethnic, or specific regional conditions" (ibid.).
[66] "support of tolerant and democratic attitudes towards all members of society without distinction" (ibid.).
[67] "Increasing employability" (ibid.).
[68] "Increasing economic competitiveness and the prosperity of society" (ibid.).
[69] "How can we develop openness towards change and at the same time succeed in passing on the riches of the past, and how can we link the European dimension and national traditions?" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 20).
[70] One hundred and eight occurrences of *"národ"*,versus one hundred and eighteen occurrences of *"společnost"*.
[71] One hundred and ninety-three occurrences of "nation", versus one hundred and nine occurrences of "society".

nationalizing program to those outside of the linguistic “in-group” than those on the inside.

The Holocaust is singled out as a specific historical event that is to be included in the curriculum in accordance with the European Council's commitment to education for democratic citizenship (MŠMT, 2001, p. 32). This commitment also covers language education, citizenship education and more general knowledge of twentieth century history. The specific requirement to teach the Holocaust as part of history education might help to contextualise other forms of racism and discrimination and help with the aim of promoting tolerant attitudes towards Others. The reason for singling out the Holocaust is not elaborated on in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], perhaps signalling an assumption that this is self-evident. The fact that it is the only specific curricular content suggested in the document suggests that it is considered to have particular symbolic significance, and that knowledge of this episode in twentieth century history is considered to be a pre-requisite for European democratic citizenship.

The strategies to be deployed to achieve the stated aims of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] are chiefly focused on increasing spending on education whilst increasing professional autonomy in individual institutions. The Ministry of Education's role is envisioned as a guiding one, in which it defines the principles and strategic aims of the education system and is responsible for developing a system of evaluation that ensures standards. However, the responsibility for the implementation of strategies and meeting standards is delegated to school leaders and regional officials (MŠMT, 2001, p. 24). The need to effect a cultural change in some cases is also implied, and the Ministry's new role is to direct this, rather than dictate, by creating *“takové předpoklady, podmínky a mechanizmy působení a pomoci školám „zvenčí“, aby se školy samy mohly a chtěly měnit zevnitř.”*[72] (MŠMT, 2001, p.23).

In outlining the strategies needed for reform, the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] tacitly acknowledges that certain barriers to wide-ranging and fundamental reforms exist. These include the low pay of teachers and the need to overcome entrenched attitudinal barriers:

[72] “such pre-requisites, conditions and mechanisms for influencing and helping schools from 'the outside', that they may want and be able to change from inside” (MŠMT, 2001, p.23).

"Mají si být vědomi, že není možná zásadní změna školy bez získání učitelů k odpovědnému spolurozhodování. Měli by být připravováni i na nepochopení či odpor spolupracovníků vůči žádoucím záměrům a vědět, jak v takových situacích postupovat."[73] (MŠMT, 2001, p.23)

Pre-supposing resistance to reform indicates that not all members of the teaching profession were expected to embrace the proposals outlined in the Paper or be willing to make the required changes to their working practices, hence the emphasis on the gradual and consultative nature of reform. Resistance to such fundamental change in education is supported by the empirical findings of Jarkovská et. al. (2015), who argue that classroom practice had failed to adapt to increased diversity. The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] envisions that financial or institutional barriers would be tackled through a combination of increased spending on education, increased autonomy for regional authority education departments regarding how they spend their budgets, and EU structural funds to support specific projects (MŠMT, 2001, p. 26). However, these alone do not address the cultural shift required to fully implement the planned reforms, whilst teachers themselves were frustrated by the slow pace of change to a system that was no longer totalitarian, but neither did they perceive it as fully democratic (Moree, 2013, p.15).

A final interesting feature of the introductory chapter is the inclusion at the beginning of a seventeenth century quotation from the Czech pedagogue Jan Ámos Komenský, which illustrates his aspiration for education as a humanising force accessible to all:

„...První, čeho si přejeme, jest, aby tak plně a k plnému lidství mohl býti vzděláván ne nějaký jeden člověk nebo několik jich nebo mnoho, nýbrž všichni lidé vespolek i každý zvlášť, mladí istaří, bohatí i chudí, urození i neurození, mužové i ženy, zkrátka každý, komu se dostalo údělu narodit se člověkem, aby konečně jednou bylo celé lidské pokolení vzdělané po všech věkových stupních, stavech, pohlaví a národech. Za druhé si přejeme, aby každý člověk byl celistvě vzdělán a správně vycvičen nikoli jen v

[73] "They should be aware that major changes in a school are not possible without the support of teachers for responsible participation in decision-making. They should also be prepared for a lack of understanding and opposition to desirable aims on the part of their colleagues …" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 22).

> *nějaké jediné věci nebo v několika málo nebo v mnohých, nýbrž ve všech, které dovršují podstatu lidství..."*[74] (J. A. Komenský: *Obecná porada o nápravě věcí lidských. III sv. Pampaedia,* cited in MŠMT, 2001, p. 13).

The use of this quotation not only outlines the philosophical aims of the new Czech education system as it is envisioned by the paper's authors, but also establishes this view of education as having a national origin. The aims of education as outlined in the first section of this chapter broadly reflect Komenský's ideals. It is implied that their fulfilment in the Czech context is, almost a historical inevitability – a return to normality after years of communist oppression. It is the only quotation used in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], and its effect is to establish that an individual, egalitarian, personalized approach to education is rooted in Czech traditions. This carries the implication that problems in the education system are the result of an historical aberration, rather than a lack of will or capacity to attain the ideal expressed by Komenský. Utilising the symbolic image of Komenský establishes the basis for reform in Czech traditions, which is important for the paper's authors as it makes reform appear less like a system imposed from the outside than it otherwise might, given the paper's emphasis on emulating the education systems in Western liberal democracies.

5.2.4 Basic Education in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]

As this thesis is specifically concerned with the upper stages of basic education (***základní škola***), this section will look in more detail at the specific function of this stage of schooling as described in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], and how the document envisages reforms taking place at this stage. The Paper points out that *"Základní vzdělávání je v současnosti jedinou vzdělávací etapou, které se povinně účastní každé dítě v ČR a která vytváří*

[74] "… Our first wish is for full power of development into full humanity, not of one particular person or a few or even many, but of **every single individual**, young and old, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, men and women – in a word, of every human being born of Earth, with the ultimate aim of providing education to the entire human race regardless of age, class, sex and nationality. Secondly, our wish is that every human being should be rightly developed and perfectly educated not in any limited sense but in every respect that makes for the perfection *of human nature …"* (J. A. Comenius [Komenský]: Pampaedia or Universal Education, cited in MŠMT, 2001, p. 13).

základ pro celoživotní učení u celé populace."[75] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 47). Therefore, this is seen as a crucial stage in education, as it allows children to mix with peers with different levels of ability and social background (ibid.). This acknowledges an awareness that schools can act as important vehicles of the transmission of "social capital", as posited by Bordieu (2010) and expanded upon by Bernstein (2000). However, it also raises important questions about children who are excluded from mainstream education at this crucial stage, which will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter. That the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] recognises the socialising function of compulsory schooling as well as its value in the production of an educated workforce has serious implications, given the persistent segregation of Roma in Czech schools, as it could be interpreted as a lack of institutional will to address this issue (Fewnick, 2011), or even willingness to perpetuate the existing divisions.

Basic school is divided into two stages, grades 1-5 forming the first stage, the main purpose of which is *"vytváření předpokladů pro celoživotní učení"*[76] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 47) by promoting positive habits and attitudes towards learning. The second stage is made up of grades 6-9, in which the aim *"je především poskytnout žákům co nejkvalitnější základ všeobecného vzdělání"* [77] (MŠMT, 2001, p.48). This phase may be taught at multi-year *gymnázia*[78] as well as at ***základní školy.*** This two-tier system that creams off the most academically able in the upper years to early entrance to a *gymnázium* has the potential to limit the heterogeneity of peer groups that the paper identifies as being important to pupils' socialisation. The commentary on this in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] is interesting:

> *"Sociologové považují tuto selekci dětí za sociálně nespravedlivou, poněvadž se v ní více než skutečné intelektuální schopnosti odrážejí zvýhodnění daná vzdělanostní, ekonomickou a sociální pozicí rodiny, z níž děti pocházejí (tzv. kulturní kapitál)"*[79] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 50).

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[75] "At present, Basic Schooling only phase of education that is compulsory for every child in the Czech Republic, and so lays the basis for the lifelong learning of the entire population" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 50).
[76] "to create the conditions for lifelong learning" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 50).
[77] "is to provide pupils with as good a basis of general education as possible" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 52).
[78] "gymnasiums" - academically selective senior schools which are roughly equivalent to grammar schools in the UK.
[79] "Sociologists see this selection of children as socially unjust, because it reflects advantages given by the knowledge, economic, and social position of the families the children come from (so-called cultural capital), rather than pupils' real intellectual abilities" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 50).

Whilst the potential for the reproduction of social inequalities is acknowledged here, the use of the phrase “Sociologists see” has the effect of distancing the attitudes of the paper's authors from this view, although elsewhere in the document the need for education to combat the reproduction of inequalities in this manner is explicitly endorsed (MŠMT, 2001, p. 18).

The emphasis of reforms of *základní škola* is on developing pupils' individual potential, whilst imbuing values and skills that will benefit them in further educational endeavours (MŠMT, 2001, p. 48). This is to be achieved through an increasingly differentiated pedagogical approach and reformed assessment techniques which should rewards positive advances rather than punishing deficiencies (ibid.). Such an inclusive and differentiated approach to teaching tends to require more effort and planning on the part of teachers, however, they are becoming more widely adopted and advocated as evidence suggests that inclusive education has a positive impact on all pupils’ attitudes (Dyson, et al., 2004). However, in the Czech context, the continued practices of academic selection and physical segregation have the potential to limit the impacts of these strategies.

5.2.5 Inclusion and Equality in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]

Although the egalitarian purpose of education is set out early in the White Paper, the reforms advocated reveal a slightly inconsistent approach to this. Inclusion in education can mean different things in different contexts, but it is widely agreed to be an important issue in education globally. According to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 23), children with disabilities have the right to special care in education. This might justify educating children in institutions specially adapted to catering for their specific needs, but this results in physical and social segregation from their peers. Article 2 of the same document protects children from discrimination – including indirect discrimination - which might include being unable to participate in and take full advantage of the educational provision available, due to physical or cognitive disabilities, having a home language that is different to the medium of instruction, or experiencing discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, or ethnicity (United Nations, 1989). In the Czech context, these grounds converge in a surprising way, as the allocation of pupils

to *speciální školy*[80] for those with disabilities has been demonstrated to have an ethnic/racial dimension to it, with pupils from Roma backgrounds being over-represented in these segregated schools (Roma Education Fund, 2012). To obtain a picture of how the approaches to inclusive education advocated by the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] might impact on the diversity of school population, and by extension on development of identities, it is necessary to examine its proposals to promote equal access to education for *all* pupils. A commitment to the principles of key documents which guarantee equal and universal access to education is set out in the introductory chapter:

> *"V souladu s Všeobecnou deklarací a mezinárodními pakty o lidských právech, Evropskou chartou lidských práv, Úmluvou o právech dítěte, Ústavou České republiky a Listinou základních práv a svobod se Česká republika ztotožňuje s pojetím, které považuje vzdělání za jedno ze základních lidských práv poskytovaných všem lidským bytostem bez rozdílu a vyhlašuje je za nezcizitelnou a univerzální lidskou hodnotu"*[81] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14).

By putting the needs of society on a par with those of the individual, the concluding sentence here once again draws attention to the to the potential for tension between the fundamental aims of a state education system: on the one hand, its duty to allow those in its care to thrive on an individual basis; but on the other hand it must also produce perceptible benefits to society and the economy for the tax-payers who fund it. This last consideration underlines the difficulty of keeping education apart from party-political influences, as it is the elected governments who must formulate, enact and enforce education policy – and deal with the consequences if they prove unpopular. However, genuine adherence to the principles of the UN convention and the European charter requires a commitment to equal, fair, non-discriminatory access to education for all children.

The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] acknowledges the role of education in producing a fair and equal society through its capacity to act as a social leveller

[80] Special schools.

[81] "In accordance with the General Declaration of Human Rights and other international pacts, the European Charter of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Children, the Constitution of the Czech Republic, and the Paper of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, the Czech Republic aligns itself with the idea that *education is one of the basic human rights of all human beings without distinction and declares that education is an inalienable and universal human value.* The aims of education, therefore, must be derived from both individual and social needs".

and a forum for integration of people from different backgrounds (ibid.). It is envisaged this would be achieved not only through ensuring equal access to education, but also through the inclusion of human rights education and the promotion of multiculturalism in the curriculum. "Multiculturalism" is a term often associated with educational reform, but has come to mean "the political accommodation of non-white, mainly post-immigration minorities" (Modood, 2014, p. 15) in society in general. The White Paper's interpretation of multiculturalism in education is based on providing factual information *"o všech menšinách, zejména romské, židovské a německé, jejich osudech a kultuře, utváří vztahy porozumění a sounáležitosti s nimi."*[82] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14). Singling out these minorities for particular focus in rights education hints at a willingness to acknowledge the importance of these groups to Czech society in the past and confront some of the more challenging aspects of Czech history in the twentieth century. That the document requires the information about these groups is to be "factual information" ("*věcná informace"*), is interesting. Depending on the reader's interpretation, it might preclude teaching about the myths, legends and stories important to these cultures, which might be a rich source of interest for pupils. On the other hand, it might be worded as such to prevent negative stereotypes and beliefs about these groups being propagated in schools. However, there is only a single passing reference to these groups in the entire document and looks rather as though lip-service is being paid to the idea of promoting multiculturalism and the treatment of minorities in the Czech lands, rather than a solid commitment to promoting a re-assessment of attitudes towards these particular minorities. This impression is re-enforced by the fact that, despite emphasizing the potential for education to reproduce or mitigate social inequalities, including racial inequalities, being noted at several points, the *de facto* segregation of Roma pupils is not addressed at any point in the Paper. The education of children with disabilities (both physical and cognitive) is raised, and plans to gradually phase out so-called "special schools" and replace them with basic schools with adapted curricula are outlined but it is stressed that *"Princip integrace a inkluze je možné realizovat pouze v součinnosti se zásadní reformou školského*

[82] "on all minorities, especially the Romany, Jewish and German ones, and their fates and cultures, and shaping the relations of understanding and solidarity" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 15).

systému jako celku."[83] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 58), underlining an assumption that this reform would be particularly challenging to implement. Moree illustrates the difficulty of changing school cultures to be more inclusive when the wider culture is hostile to such changes with an anecdote from her empirical research of a parent being called to school to discuss his son's racist language. The parent in question declares his racist stance to the teacher and refuses to have his child brought up to think differently from himself (2013, p.125). Although not representative, this anecdote is illustrative of the difficulties faced by schools wishing to promote a more inclusive and multicultural agenda.

Selection in education, either by academic ability, willingness to pay for education, or religious affiliation inevitably leads to segregated cohorts, which in turn might play out in post-school settings. The structural and funding reforms suggested in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] for tackling this had the potential to promote social equality. That the multi-year *gymnázia* perpetuate social and class divisions by "creaming off" the most intellectually gifted children at an early stage in their education has already been discussed. The Paper suggested phasing them out by stopping new admissions from as early as 2002, a significant and immediate change which might have made a significant impact. However, this reform proved so controversial that it was not carried out (MŠMT, 2009).

It is also puzzling that in spite of a stated (although vague) commitment to utilising education's potential as a means of attaining social justice, the decentralised funding model outlined in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] allows regions to allocate state funding to both private and religious educational institutions (MŠMT, 2001, p. 24), which would allow further segregation of cohorts not only by ability, but also by income and religion.

Increasing the capacity of schools to promote and not inhibit social justice by minimising the effect of the inequalities that can affect pupils' learning and participation is one of the central aims of education described in the White Paper. It is emphasised that doing so would bring educational practices in the Czech Republic into line with those in "developed democratic countries". However, opening up the education system to market forces by

[83] "The principle of integration and inclusion can only be implemented in synergy with a fundamental reform of the education system as a whole" (MŠMT, 2001, p. 62).

permitting the establishment of private schools means that a new potentially divisive feature was introduced to the Czech education system, that the reforms proposed in the White Paper do not address - and indeed could reinforce (Schlicht, et al., 2010). The reforms, therefore, risk replicating the inequalities that exist in the "developed democracies" that the paper suggests emulating.

5.2.6 Reflections on the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]

The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] could easily be dismissed as a tepid, politically correct document that merely pays lip-service to the values of the UNCRC and the other documents that informed its development. That certainly remains a possible interpretation. However, the particular context in which the document was produced must be considered. The reforms it suggests would most likely involve not only a significant shift in the working practices of teachers and head teachers, but an increased workload accompanied only by a very gradual pay increase. The authors appear to have been anticipating resistance to the proposed reforms, therefore make references to research and established practices in "developed democracies" to support the case for reform, whilst emphasising the gradual nature of change where it might be perceived to be most challenging – particularly the transformation of "special schools" to "basic schools". The tentative balance between the need to conform to European norms whilst maintaining the support of the front-line staff required to carry out these reforms is a theme that runs throughout the White Paper. The difficulty in doing so is evidenced by the failure so far to phase out the multi-year *gymnazia* due to the controversy the proposal provoked.

A striking feature of the White Paper is the lack of reference to reform in the post-communist context. The transformation of society is discussed in general terms of increasingly rapid technological advances that affect all countries, and there is only one reference to how the political and economic change from communism is expected to affect education – namely that future workers will need to be trainable, flexible and independent due to increasingly unstable labour markets (MŠMT, 2001, p. 16). The emphasis on trainability rather than knowledge acquisition is a key feature of education in capitalist countries, and one that tends to advantage those who already possess a measure of social capital from their home background (Bernstein, 2000).

Precarity of employment is also one of the only references to a potential downside to economic transformation. Together with multiple references to "developed democracies" and international organizations, the overall effect is to suggest the desirability of emulating norms of Western countries, rather than critical analysis and adaptation of reforms tailored to the specific needs of the Czech Republic. The key function of the document, it seems is to symbolically signal the ideological orientation of the Czech Republic, emphasizing its congruence with "European norms" in preparation for EU membership.

Prospective European Union membership clearly exerted a powerful influence on the content of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], as the country worked towards full membership status (MŠMT, 2001, p. 16). European norms or laws, such as the European Convention on Human Rights (which covers the rights of the child) are referred to in discussions of inclusion and equality to highlight commitment to the protection of minority rights in the country, which is one of the key Copenhagen criteria that potential member states must meet to qualify for membership. However, the suggested reforms didn't go far enough to address the needs of a diversifying population. This was confirmed by it being declared "no longer valid" in 2014, having failed to sufficiently address the issue of reducing inequality in education (MŠMT, 2014).

The potential implications of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] on the development of identities and attitudes towards Others are explored further in the next section through analysis of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]. This is a curriculum guidance document that is based on the guidelines set out in the White Paper. However, at this stage some preliminary observations can be drawn from the. White Paper: firstly, that the ideological re-orientation of the Czech Republic towards Western European, capitalistic norms was assumed; secondly, that history and citizenship education were seen as important for passing on ideas about the Czech nation and for promoting tolerance; and thirdly, that addressing racial inequality was recognised as an important issue to be addressed in the future, but was not by any means a key priority.

5.3 *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]- Framework for Basic Education 2005 (with amendments as of 2007)

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání*[84] [RVP], published in 2005 and revised in 2007, aimed to provide schools with guidance that would enable them to produce their own School Educational Programmes which would address the overall aims of education set out in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]. It was produced by the Czech Ministry of Education [MŠMT] in consultation with a range of contributors, and it is one of several Framework Educational Programmes which cover the various stages of education in the Czech Republic. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] covers both the lower and upper stages of *základní škola*. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between these framework documents and other policy documents from state to school level:

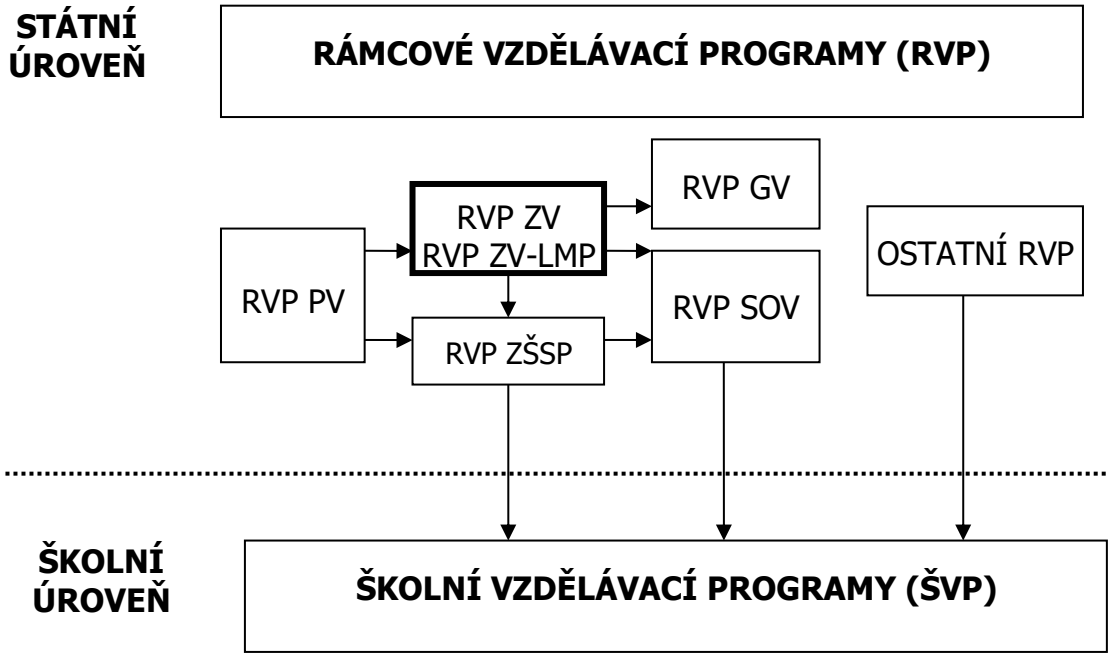


Figure 5.1: Relationship between levels of policy in Czech education [MŠMT, 2007]

This analysis focuses on the content of the document, with particular emphasis on those sections that relate to history and citizenship education. Through thematic analysis, it takes a critical approach to the claims made in the document and to identifies some of the assumptions that underpinned its development. The aim of doing so is to assess the extent to which the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] promoted the reforms envisioned by the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] in relation to creating a fair

[84] Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education.

and equal society. It analyses how the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] tackles the issue of promoting respect and tolerance for other cultures, whilst at the same time passing on national traditions and the national culture, as advised in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper].

First of all, the stated aims and intended outcomes of following the guidance in the document are examined in some detail, paying attention to the language used as well as the aims themselves. Secondly, the range of subjects covered at each stage, their categorisation, and time allocation are described, to provide a general picture of the priority granted to different subject areas. This is discussed in relation to Bernstein's model of classification and framing, which helps to reveal the wider implications of these matters, and the potential impact on the formation of national identity. Thirdly, the guidance for content to be covered (particularly in the areas of history and citizenship education) is then analysed in detail, as it relates to the following emergent themes: developing language competence, developing national consciousness, and promoting multicultural values. This is followed by an overview of "cross-curricular" subjects and their position within the Framework, looking at how their positioning contributes to the "hidden curriculum". Finally, approaches to equality and inclusion outlined by the Framework, and the implications of these for the promotion of racial equality in Czech society, are considered, alongside some miscellaneous observations taken from elsewhere in the document.

5.3.1 Aims and Objectives of Basic Education

Basic Education is the only compulsory stage of education for all Czech nationals. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] begins by defining the concept and objectives of basic education, before setting out the key competencies that pupils are expected to have attained upon completion of this stage. It may be inferred from this that the Czech Ministry of Education considered these competencies to constitute the basic requirements for successful functioning in society.

As the Bílá kniha *[White Paper]* indicated that the education should develop in such a way as to prepare pupils for life in a European capitalist economy and political democracy, it is to be expected that promotion of core

European values (i.e. “respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities” (European Council, 2007) forms an important part of education. However, the expression of this in the Framework is somewhat exclusive:

> *“Základní vzdělávání na 2. stupni pomáhá žákům získat vědomosti, dovednosti a návyky, které jim umožní samostatné učení a utváření takových hodnot a postojů, které vedou k uvážlivému a kultivovanému chování, k zodpovědnému rozhodování a respektování práv a povinností občana našeho státu i Evropské unie.”*[85] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10).

By placing emphasis on the national and European contexts, a de-prioritisation for the rights of non-citizens (which could apply to refugees and asylum seekers, as well as migrants from other countries who choose not to, or are not able to, become citizens) is implied. Although this does not necessarily *exclude* promotion of respect for the rights of *all* people, regardless of their background and origin, it does clearly prioritise those of national and EU citizens. In doing so, it implicitly endorses the view that the rights of some are worthier of protection than the rights of others. This makes it difficult for those people perceived as falling outside of one of these categories of belonging to attain equality in the wider society (Modood, 2013, p. 34).

The key objectives outlined are focused mainly on the development of skills such as co-operation, communication and problem solving, but also refer to attitudes and values that should be acquired at the basic stage of education – freedom, responsibility, and tolerance for others. The only objective that refers to the *content* of education does so in relation to pupils' ability to apply knowledge to supplement their skills *“při rozhodování o vlastní životní a profesní orientaci”*[86] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 11). This seems surprising, given that the bulk of the document is devoted to quite detailed description of what the content of this stage of education ought to include. However, the next section on *“Klíčové kompetence”*[87] explains that purpose of content is *“učivo chápáno*

[85] “Basic education at Stage 2 helps pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and habits that will enable them to study independently and to create such values and attitudes as lead to prudent and cultivated behaviour, to responsible decision-making and to respect for the rights and obligations of citizens of both their country and the European Union” (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10).
[86] “when making decisions regarding the aims of their own life and profession” (MŠMT, 2007, p. 11).
[87] “Key Competencies”.

jako prostředek k osvojení činnostně zaměřených očekávaných výstupů, které se postupně propojují a vytvářejí předpoklady k účinnému a komplexnímu využívání získaných schopností a dovedností na úrovni klíčových kompetencí"[88] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10). This raises a fundamental question over the purpose of the document as an instrument of curriculum planning as the focus is more on developing skills than transmitting content. Kelly (1999) identified three broad approaches to curriculum planning: a content driven approach, an objectives driven approach, and a process driven approach. These may overlap in various ways, and each is problematic in its own way. For example, in a content centred curriculum the selection of content is often politically driven and favours the dominant or elite social group (Ross, 2000, p. 97); the objectives model can become led by assessment; and process curricula present challenges for the objective assessment of attainment. Of all of these, the process model most closely reflects what might be commonly considered a "progressive" approach in education, as it allows for the greatest degree of adaptability of teaching to suit the needs of individual learners. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] appears to advocate a mixture of the objective-based and process-based models, despite prescribing a great deal of content quite closely. This conflict in curriculum perspective that is neither unique to the Czech Republic, nor easily resolved, as schooling strives to meet the needs of a wide range of stakeholders (Priestley and Humes, 2010).

The key competencies of most interest here are the *"Kompetence občanské"*[89]*.* However, before going on to look at these competencies in more detail, it is worth noting that threaded throughout all of the competencies described in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], there is an implicit assumption of the development of a context specific "cultural capital", the possession of which is strongly determined by one's social origin (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 6). For example, pupils should be able to communicate verbally and in writing in a way that is *"souvisle a kultivovaně"*[90] (MŠMT, 2007, p.12). What constitutes "cultivated" communication, or who determines what it means is not specified, meaning that achievement of this

[88] "a means to master activity-oriented outcomes which are gradually combined and create pre-conditions for an efficient and comprehensive use of acquired abilities and skills at the level of key competencies" (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10).
[89] "Civil Competencies".
[90] "coherent and cultivated".

competence is likely to be assessed on the basis of the cultural bias of the assessor (in most cases the class teacher). This potentially discriminates against those who use non-standard language in their everyday communication, an issue which is particularly likely to affect Roma pupils (Jarkovská, et al., 2015). According to the *"Kompetence pracovní"*[91] pupils are expected to be able to preserve social and cultural values (MŠMT, 2007, p.13). Once again, the particular values to be preserved are not defined, and assessment is likely to be subject to the cultural bias of the assessor. This has the potential to disadvantage newcomers to the system, as the baseline of "cultural capital" is likely to be "acquired outside of the educational system" (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 14). According to Bourdieu, the school's capacity to transmit this baseline knowledge is limited, as its acquisition "depends of the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from the family (Bourdieu, 2010, p.23). This means that pupils whose families do not pass on the cultural capital valued by the dominant in-group are more likely to be disadvantaged at school and less able to take advantage of their education to make up for it.

The "Civil Competencies" to be achieved by the end of *základní škola* involve developing respect for the beliefs of others; understanding their rights and responsibilities and the laws pertaining to these; and behaving responsibly towards others and the environment. The language used to express these competencies is more inclusive than in the pre-amble; the "others" referred to are not specified and therefore can be presumed to apply to all "Others". They emphasise pupils' responsibility to take a stand against all sorts of violence and injustice, inculcating at an early stage the moral obligation to stand up for the rights of other people (MŠMT, 2007). However, having established earlier in the document the implicit hierarchy of importance of rights, with those of nationals and Europeans most important, in practice a high level of commitment would be required to emphasise that this applies equally to all people.

The importance of having "national" knowledge and developing an affinity for the national culture is also covered by these *"Kompetence občanské"*[92], which require that the pupil *"respektuje, chrání a ocení naše tradice a kulturní i historické dědictví, projevuje pozitivní postoj k uměleckým*

[91] "Working Competencies".
[92] "Civil competencies".

dílům, smysl pro kulturu a tvořivost, aktivně se zapojuje do kulturního dění a sportovních aktivit"[93] (MŠMT, 2007 p.12). This competence, as expressed in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], raises some important questions. As it prioritizes "national" traditions and heritage, we must ask: what is included and excluded in this definition and who gets to decide? The underlying assumption appears to be that this is self-evident and needs no explanation. However, as culture is not static (Barth, 1969, pp. 22-23), decisions must be made as to which traditions and aspects of the "national" culture should be protected, respected, and appreciated, potentially leaving the door open to the official manipulation of historical memory. However, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] does not set out specifics but leaves it to open to schools and practitioners how to interpret this guidance. It is possible that this would lead to the reproduction of pre-established notions of the "most important" characteristics of national culture and identity. If the content of the curriculum is supposed to support the development of these competencies, the prescribed content should provide insight as to what values and traditions are meant to be upheld in schools so that these can be openly discussed and critiqued. The vagueness of the guidance in this area appears to depend on the assumption of a share culture among those tasked with implementing it. Similarly, an attempt to assess "attitudes" towards works of art is culturally loaded and highly subjective. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] also includes a requirement for active involvement in cultural and sporting activities, which one the one hand emphasises personal responsibility for health, but also suggests that personal health is in some way a public commodity. This is in keeping with the requirements of a capitalist democracy – that citizens are required to take individual responsibility for themselves, but also for the whole of society (Hornát, 2019, p. 274). That appreciation of art, culture, tradition and history are all considered to be "key civic competences" shows that the document promotes the impression of an ideal citizen who is physically fit and strong, cultured, and patriotic. However, the unspecified nature of what it means to be cultured and patriotic means that these attributes

[93] "respects, protects and appreciates national traditions and the country's cultural and historical heritage; has a positive attitude to works of art; has a sense of culture and creativity, gets actively involved in cultural and sporting activities" (MŠMT, 2007, p.12).

are susceptible to being defined by the dominant group as a means of asserting distinction from an Other (Bordieu, 2010, p.256).

Given these ideals, it may be helpful to consider the aims of education and the key competencies outlined in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] as more aspirational than prescriptive; it is difficult to imagine any adult who can claim to have achieved all of them, let alone a teenager. Nevertheless, they allow us to build a picture of what a the ideal "good citizen" is perceived to be like, not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but also in terms of tastes and values. The real question is whether these qualities are really necessary to responsible citizenship, or merely a culturally specific and exclusionary idea.

5.3.2 Subjects, Prioritisation, Classification and Framing

The organization of knowledge into subjects and subject groupings is what Bernstein (2000) refers to as "classification" and is an important consideration when examining how schools legitimize and transmit knowledge. Strong classification occurs in schools where there are strong distinctions between different subjects and they are instructed separately, each having its own discourse. Weaker classification results in subjects being grouped together with interconnectedness acknowledged or even emphasised. Bernstein points out the often-arbitrary nature of these classifications, and asks "in whose interest is the apartness of things and in whose interest is the new togetherness and new integration?" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 11). This is an important point to consider when analysing a curriculum document, as it can reveal the assumptions and traditions that lie behind what seem at first to be simply common-sense decisions. Closely connected to the concept of classification is that of "framing", which is concerned with control over selection of material, its sequencing, pacing, and "the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible" (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 12-13). The "social base" referred to here can mean the whole of the education system, or individual schools or classes. Where strong framing exists the structure of education is rigid, but in such systems the power relations are explicit. For example, knowledge is transmitted from a high level of authority (e.g. *Ministerstvo školství*, *mládeže a tělovýchovy*) to the pupil (acquirer). Where framing is weaker, Bernstein points out, the "acquirer has more *apparent*

control" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13). However, he also emphasizes that weak framing, like weak classification, is variable and may merely serve to camouflage the powers that govern pedagogical practice, creating an impression of progressiveness. This impression is created thanks to the level of autonomy granted to individual teachers and pupils in weakly classified systems, which is traditionally considered an indication of the "progressiveness" of a given educational system (Bernstein, 2000, p. 14).

Walford (1986) used an earlier version of Bernstein's model to look at the effects of classification and framing on the English education system. He points out that high levels of classification and framing are more often present in the prestigious public-school sector, whilst these are weakest for the vocational courses in state schools, which have the lowest prestige attached. These strongly framed and classified courses tend to be content focused, with a strong emphasis on transmitting a body of knowledge (Kelly, 1999). However, the non-timetabled activities at boarding schools are an example of weak classification and framing, which run alongside the official curriculum. Walford (1986) notes that in providing such activities for pupils, an invisible pedagogy remains at work. Pupils become aware of unspoken rules and values by which they might be judged. Although these are un-codified and ill-defined, they are pervasive and value laden, and shape not only the school culture, but the tier of society that emerges from these schools. Therefore, pupils at these schools are exposed to the formally transmitted and legitimized knowledge needed for success, as well as the opportunity to develop the most valued social mores. This opportunity is denied to those attending, for example, vocational courses where framing and classification is weaker and less focused on transmitting content. Although the modern Czech system has little in common with the English boarding school, the general principle can still be applied that weak framing and classification allows more scope for established cultural norms to influence educational practices (Bernstein, 2000).

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] sets out its aims and objectives in the language of progressive education. It strives to find balance between providing guidance without dictating content, and ensuring standards whilst allowing for individual differences, stating:

> *"Učivo je v RVP ZV strukturováno do jednotlivých tematických okruhů (témat, činností) a je chápáno jako prostředek k dosažení očekávaných*

výstupů. Pro svoji informativní a formativní funkci tvoří nezbytnou součást vzdělávacího obsahu. Učivo, vymezené v RVP ZV, je ***doporučené*** *školám k distribuci a k dalšímu rozpracování do jednotlivých ročníků nebo delších časových úseků. Na úrovni ŠVP se stává učivo závazné"* [94] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10).

This implies progressiveness by relinquishing control over framing at the central or highest level, providing individual schools with the ultimate responsibility for their own curricula. However, in reality it does not alter the hierarchical structure or allow for control over what is taught to be meaningfully shifted to the receiver. Instead, it weakens the framing of criteria and pace, blurring the lines of authority that run from MŠMT to the individual schools, but not substantially altering them. By "recommending" material, pacing, etc. to all schools, a set of expectations and standards are communicated. Deviation from the norms established by these recommendations represents a risk for any schools doing so, as they may be seen to be "failing" or "falling behind" the schools that follow the "recommendations" set out by the MŠMT.

The classification of subjects outlined in the RVP is revealing, if we are to consider whose interests are served by the separation or integration of subject areas. The "traditional" subjects are categorized and grouped according to thematic areas. The thematic areas to be covered in *Základní škola*, and the subjects they incorporate are as follows:

[94] "The subject matter is structured within the education framework of basic education into thematic areas (themes, activities) and is supposed to be a *means to achieve the expected outcomes.* Due to its informative and formative function it is an integral part of the educational content. Curriculum defined within the education framework of basic education is **recommended** to schools for distribution and further detailing for the individual grades or longer time segments. At the level of the school educational programme the curriculum is binding" (MŠMT, 2007, p. 15).

Thematic Area	Subjects included
Jazyk a jazyková komunikace (Language and Language Communication)	*Český jazyk a literatura, Cizí jazyk* (Czech Language and Literature, Foreign Language)
Matematika a její aplikace (Mathematics and Its Applications)	*Matematika a její aplikace* (Mathematics and Its Applications)
Informační a komunikační technologie (Information and Communication Technologies)	*Informační a komunikační technologie* (Information and Communication Technologies)
*Člověk a jeho svět**[95] (Man and his World*)	*Dějepis, Výchova k občanství* (History, Civic Education)
Člověk a společnost (Man and Society)	*Dějepis, Výchova k občanství* (History, Civic Education)
Člověk a příroda (Man and Nature)	*Fyzika, Chemie, Přírodopis, Zeměpis* (Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences, Geography)
Umění a kultura (Arts and Culture)	*Hudební výchova, Výtvarná výchova* (Music, Fine Art)
Člověk a zdraví (Man and Health)	*Výchova ke zdraví, Tělesná výchova* (Health Education, Physical Education)
Člověk a svět práce (Man and the World of Work)	*Člověk a svět práce* (Humans and The World of Work)

Table 5.1: Subject Groupings in the RVP

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] also contains a requirement for cross-curricular study to take place across the following themes:

- *Osobnostní a sociální výchova* (Personal and Social Education)
- *Výchova demokratického občana* (Democratic Citizenship)
- *Výchova k myšlení v evropských a globálních souvislostech* (Thinking within European and Global Contexts)
- *Multikulturní výchova* (Multicultural Education)
- *Environmentální výchova* (Environmental Education)
- *Mediální výchova* (Media Education)

The inclusion of cross-curricular subjects and the grouping together of subjects in this fashion represent a weakening of classification. Bernstein demonstrated that middle-class children fare better when classification and framing are weak, most likely due to the cultural capital they acquire at home (2000, pp. 19-20). In the Czech context, where class and race are interconnected, this could potentially impact on the reproduction of social and ethnic inequality. The perception of Roma as "benefit takers" persists (Obrovska, 2018, p. 31), while middle-class class pupils are more likely to be from the dominant national culture (Roma Education Fund, 2012). The weak

[95] This thematic area is specific to the lower stage of *základní škola*. It forms the foundation of the thematic area "Humans and Society", which is studied from the sixth to ninth grades.

classification of these subjects and the “invisible pedagogy” that this involves, thanks to the disguised power dynamics, means that teachers have more leeway to teach these topics in accordance with their own views, which, as Jarkovská, et al. (2015) demonstrated, are often highly prejudicial against Roma.

Before examining the wider implications of this, it is worth looking at what these subject groupings suggest about the perceived links between the subjects. That the thematic area “Language and Language Communication” incorporates Czech language, Czech literature, *and* foreign language learning suggests that competence in a foreign language is seen as important (or almost as important) as competence in Czech. Whilst this supports an impression of education fitting pupils for life in an increasingly globalized world, it masks some important assumptions. The first of these assumptions is that pupils will speak Czech as a mother tongue (or at least as competently as if it were their mother tongue). The second is that, from the perspective of cultural capital, not all bilingualisms are equal (Gramling, 2014). The difference in value placed on different language competencies is illustrated by the early replacement of Russian in schools with Western European languages such as English, French, and German. It is also unclear whether the category of “Foreign Languages” extends to non-Czech pupils’ mother tongues. By failing to explicitly address this, this classification also potentially ignores (or smothers) the right of children from non-Czech backgrounds to be able to learn about and practice their own culture and language (article 30, UNCRC, 1989), particularly where these differ from those of the majority. This right is only fleetingly referred to in the section that deals with teaching pupils with special educational needs (MŠMT, 2007, p. 102). Whilst accommodating a wide range of languages and cultures raises a range of practical and pedagogical challenges, the fact that it is not an integral part of the prescribed content suggests that addressing this issue is a low priority.

Only Mathematics and Information and Communication Technologies remain strongly classified as subjects, distinct from others. The “practical” aspect of Mathematics is hinted at through including its “Applications” in its thematic title, although it remains distinct from other subjects where its principles may be applied such as ICT and Physics. It may be the case that the more “strongly classified” a subject is, the more academic – thus potentially

more prestigious - it is perceived to be. “Arts and Culture”, incorporating music and fine art also occupies a distinct category, emphasizing the distinctively creative nature of these subjects, and setting them somewhat apart from other subjects. All of the other thematic areas’ names begin with “Man and …”, suggesting a strongly pragmatic attitude to each of the subjects, and an approach that will be *relevant* to pupils’ experience of the “real world”. Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences, and Geography are linked, emphasizing their similarities as “hard sciences” that deal with objectively discoverable facts, as distinct from the “social sciences”. That History is bracketed under the same theme as Civic Education carries the implication that understanding of history is necessarily correlated to developing civic values. The implications of this depend heavily upon the *content* of the curriculum in each case but does indicate that an acceptance of (or at least familiarity with) an official historical discourse is associated with good citizenship. “Man and the World of Work” is a theme that is taught throughout basic school, and is perhaps the least well defined, incorporating handicrafts, plant cultivation, food preparation, and use of ICT. “Low status” subjects are subsumed under this heading, which is essentially preparation for manual or domestic work.

Bernstein suggests that in the context of change (in this case the reform of the education system), two central questions should be asked, namely whether the proposed change originates from a dominant or dominated group, and what values retain their prominence in the face of change (2000, p. 15). The weakening of classification between most subjects, whilst retaining strong classification between subject areas (i.e. mathematics, arts, sciences, and social sciences) in this case is undertaken by a dominant (or elite) sector of society, the Czech Ministry of Education [MŠMT]. Although the consultative nature of the ’s development is emphasized, the ultimate responsibility for its production lay with MŠMT. Therefore, the people determining the subject classifications were those with the education, cultural capital, and actual power to direct change. That weaker classification is associated with courses for less academically able pupils is supported by Walford’s (1986) observation that in the UK system, the strongest classification and framing exists in prestigious private schools, while weaker classification and framing exists in vocational colleges. By retaining strong classification and framing around subjects such as mathematics, information and communication technology, and subjects

associated with “high culture” (such as fine arts and literature in the titular language), the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] communicates the higher status of these subjects. The subjects around which framing and classification have been weakened (including cross-curricular subjects) that have the greatest potential for reproducing existing values are those intended to reach for as wide a range of pupils as possible.

In addition to the classification and framing at work, the time allotted to a subject is directly correlated to its perceived importance in the curriculum. The early years focus on developing literacy and numeracy where Czech language and literature dominates the curriculum in the early years (just over forty percent), followed by Mathematics and its Applications (around 20 percent). Social subjects (under the banner of Man and his World), Foreign Languages, Physical Education, and Arts occupy a fairly equal share of the remaining school week, which includes unallocated time for mandatory cross-curricular subjects. In the upper stage of *základní škola*, less time is devoted to Czech Language and Literature, with science subjects (under the banner of “Man and Nature”) occupying a prominent role, after not featuring as a compulsory element in the early years. The time devoted to History and Civic Education has only a very slight decrease between the early years and the upper stages of *základní škola* (a drop of only one percent, from fourteen percent to thirteen percent). This indicates that the development of “civic competencies” outlined above features high on the list of priorities of the Czech Ministry of Education, from which we can infer that the development of these competencies is considered important for successful participation in Czech society.

5.3.3 *Člověk a jeho svět* and *Člověk a společnost:* Contextualizing the Individual in Society through the Curriculum

In order to better establish the extent to which ideas about nationalism and nation-building influenced the creation of this *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], the document was analysed using a thematic analysis approach, which is described in chapter 4.5.2. During the coding process, a number of codes emerged that relate to the research question 1: “*In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation*

building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?" The most significant among these were:

- Developing language competence
- Developing national consciousness
- Promoting multicultural attitudes and values
- Attitudes towards inclusion and equality

These codes emerged through both explicit aims and goals to be achieved in various subjects, but they also tacitly permeated some unexpected areas of the curriculum. In this section, each of the emergent codes are discussed in turn in order to explore underlying assumptions about the nature of Czech citizenship, the influence of historical events on contemporary society, and how these assumptions promote a culturally specific view of a well-rounded Czech citizen. This section also considers the extent to which mastery of the recommended content is accessible to all pupils regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or linguistic background. Focusing on these thematic areas will help to illustrate how the goals of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] translate into pedagogical materials in the textbook analysis chapter.

5.3.3.1 Language Competence

The Czech language is often regarded as a key signifier of "belonging" to the Czech nation (Holý, 1996). In keeping with this, the RVP sets out competence in the Czech language as the cornerstone of educational success, stating: *"Vzdělávací oblast Jazyk a jazyková komunikace zaujímá stěžejní postavení ve výchovně vzdělávacím procesu"*[96] (MŠMT, 2007, p.12). Whilst it seems inarguable that literacy is key to accessing other areas of the curriculum, the above statement involves the assumption that pupils will speak Czech as their mother tongue, an assumption that is becoming increasingly false (Jarkovská et al., 2015). Not only is this underlying assumption potentially exclusive of those who do not speak Czech as their mother tongue, but the document goes further, explicitly linking the development of the language with the development of the nation: *"chápání jazyka jako svébytného historického jevu,*

[96] "The educational area Language and Language Communication occupies a pivotal position in the educational process" (MŠMT, 2007, p.17).

v němž se odráží historický a kulturní vývoj národa, a tedy jako důležitého sjednocujícího činitele národního společenství"[97] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 13). This clearly prioritizes competence in Czech language as a pre-requisite for belonging to the "national community", a priority not granted to any of the minority languages spoken in the country, which merit only a cursory mention under *"obecné poučení o jazyce"*[98] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 17). Children of immigrant parents are expected to learn Czech quickly and well in order to successfully participate in education (Jarkovská et al. 2015).

The importance of Czech language to cultural participation is also highlighted, as one of the aims of this part of the curriculum is: *"rozvíjení pozitivního vztahu k mateřskému jazyku a jeho chápání jako potenciálního zdroje pro rozvoj osobního i kulturního bohatství"*[99] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 13). The mother tongue, it is clear from the context, is once again presumed to be Czech. This underscores the assumption that economic and cultural participation is dependent on mastery and "a positive attitude" towards the Czech language – an ill-defined concept that potentially excludes those with other linguistic priorities and abilities from belonging to the "national community".

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] recommends developing proficiency in not only every day, communicative Czech but also the ability to distinguish dialects and use non-standard language as appropriate to the situation and use the language *"ke kultivovanému projevu jako prostředku prosazení sebe sama"*[100] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 13). A distinction is implied here between users of dialect and "cultivated" users of the language. This distinction is like, although less pronounced than, the prestige that was associated with "received pronunciation" - the "cultivated" accent associated with social class rather than geographical origin (Sangster, 2014). Whilst this could be interpreted as a benign attempt to introduce and awareness of different registers of language and their appropriate usage, it may also disguise a de-legitimization of less prestigious uses of the language that are associated with Roma, in particular

[97] "Understanding language as an independent historical phenomenon which reflects the historical and cultural development of a nation and thus to see it as a major unifying agent of the national community".
[98] "general instruction on the language".
[99] "developing a positive attitude to their mother tongue and understanding it as a potential resource for the development of personal and cultural wealth".
[100] "as a cultivated means of self-assertion".

what could be described as “street-style” communication, which is not considered suitable language for use in school by teachers (Jarkovská et al., 2015). From this it seems that a racial and class-based dimension exists in the judgement of what teachers consider constituting “cultivated” communication. The vagueness of success criteria in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] allows for subjective assessment of pupils' attainment in this area, which in turn allows for the reproduction of existing prejudices, legitimized through the assessment of attainment in this area.

5.3.3.2 Developing National Consciousness

Developing a sense of belonging to the nation is explicitly set out as a goal of Historical and Civic Education in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]. These subjects are taught as academic subjects beginning in the fifth grade. Prior to this, they are composites of the “*Člověk a jeho svět”*[101] thematic area, in which *“Různé činnosti a úkoly by měly přirozeným způsobem probudit v žácích kladný vztah k místu jejich bydliště, postupně rozvíjet jejich národní cítění a vztah k naší zemi*”[102] (MŠMT, 2007, p.13). This thematic area is among the most weakly classified thematic areas in the curriculum. The framing of the content is fairly strong, in that the order of teaching and the national focus is specified in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], but in other respects the framing is weaker. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] specifies what should be taught, and the order it should be introduced, but not what should be taught *about* these topics. The introduction to the section “*Lidé a čas*”[103] - the historical thematic strand of “Humans and their World” - states:

> *“V tematickém okruhu Lidé a čas se žáci učí orientovat v dějích a v čase. Poznávají, jak a proč se čas měří, jak události postupují v čase a utvářejí historii věcí a dějů. Učí se poznávat, jak se život a věci vyvíjejí a jakým změnám podléhají v čase. V tematickém okruhu se vychází od nejznámějších událostí v rodině, obci a regionu a postupuje se k nejdůležitějším okamžikům v historii naší země. Podstatou tematického*

[101] “Man and his World”.
[102] “Various activities and tasks should naturally encourage the pupil to form a positive relationship with the place where he/she lives, and gradually develop his/her national consciousness and relation to our country”.
[103] “People and Time”.

okruhu je vyvolat u žáků zájem o minulost, o kulturní bohatství regionu i celé země. Proto je důležité, aby žáci mohli samostatně vyhledávat, získávat a zkoumat informace z dostupných zdrojů, především pak od členů své rodiny i od lidí v nejbližším okolí, aby mohli společně navštěvovat památky, sbírky regionálních i specializovaných muzeí, veřejnou knihovnu atd."[104] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 30).

This quotation highlights several issues in the teaching of history that could potentially lead to the reproduction of dominant narratives attitudes and values. The first of these is what might be considered in terms of *relevance*, starting with what is most familiar to pupils (family) and building outwards (to the "country"), thus promoting the idea that the national community is somehow connected to the family. As Anderson points out, "the family has traditionally been conceived as the domain of disinterested love and solidarity" (2006, p. 144), and linking these two at an early stage in pupils' education may help to establish that the nation and family are somehow analogous. Extrapolating this suggests that the loyalty that someone has towards their family is also due to their nation, therefore the nation can legitimately request "sacrifices" of its members (ibid.). That is not to say that the document promotes a cynical manipulation of pupils' emotions; rather it betrays an underlying assumption that there *is* a link, however intangible, between family and homeland, and that pupils should be made aware of this at an early stage in their schooling. This type of underlying assumption is of a similar nature to those that underpin primordialist views of the nation as "forms of extended kinship" (Anderson, 2006, p. 8). If this conception of the national community is promoted - explicitly or implicitly - in schools, then it is easy to see how these views can become tacitly accepted as "common sense" throughout communities and the view that nationality is an "inherent attribute of humanity" (Gellner, 1983, p.6) is therefore legitimized through schooling.

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] recommends that this thematic area covers the *"nejdůležitější okamžiky*

[104] "This thematic area begins with the most familiar events in the family, community and region and proceeds towards the most important moments in the history of our country. The essence of the thematic area is to encourage pupils to take an interest in history and the cultural wealth of the region and the entire country. It is therefore important that pupils can independently search for, obtain and explore information from available sources, particularly from members of their family and people around them so that they can jointly visit historical sights, regional and specialised museums, public libraries, etc."

v historii naší země"[105] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 30). This raises the question of which events are to be considered the "most important" and who gets to decide. Given that events' relative importance is bound to be subjective, the wording used here implies an assumption that there exists within the country a tacitly understood consensus about what these might be. This also assumes a certain homogeneity of education and cultural background among teachers as well as the pupils, as Jarkovská et al. (2015) found persists in many Czech schools. As the "most important" events are not prescribed in the RVP, the likelihood of reproducing and legitimizing dominant narratives in the classroom is strong. As Holý (1996, p. 125) points out, this plays and important role in the development of historical memory in the Czech nation, as most people's sense of history comes from what they learn in school and is reinforced by their media consumption. The use of deixis in this sentence is also interesting. Deixis refers to the use of words whose meaning depends on their use context. Here the possessive pronoun *"naší"* ("our") to refer to the country implies that the country belongs to a specific community. The identity of the "us" in this case is assumed to be the documents' creators and their intended audience - the teachers and schools using the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] as the basis for their school programmes - but it remains ambiguous. As Billig notes, such use of language, which he calls "homeland deixis" is used in political contexts to "flag the homeland, and in flagging it, make the homeland homely" (1995, pp. 105-106). In this way, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] flags the nation and its history as the property of its members, whilst signalling the boundary of the in-group as those who are privy to the knowledge of what counts as the "most important" events in the country's past.

Finally, the success criteria for this thematic area pre-supposes that pupils will be in possession of cultural capital developed outside of school, upon which formal learning can build. This is set out in explicit terms: *"Podmínkou úspěšného vzdělávání v dané oblasti je vlastní prožitek žáků vycházející z konkrétních nebo modelových situací při osvojování potřebných dovedností, způsobů jednání a rozhodování"*[106] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 30). As Bourdieu (2010) and Bernstein (2000) point out, such assumptions advantage

[105] "Most important moments in the history of our country".
[106] "Successful education in this area is conditioned upon pupils' own experience of specific or model situations when acquiring the necessary skills and approaches".

middle-class pupils (especially those of the dominant ethnic group) who have readier access to the store of "legitimate" cultural knowledge of the sort that is likely to be valued in the classroom. Although the position of the teacher as a role model is also stressed, it is clear that the school environment is expected to build on what is learned elsewhere. The provision of pre-school education was designed to make up for this shortfall of skills, as uptake of this non-compulsory grade was targeted towards "socially disadvantaged groups" (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, 2006). However, in reality these groups are composed largely of Roma pupils (Jarkovská et al. 2015). As a result, schools may not provide the pre-school year due to alleged insufficient demand by parents or fear of being labelled a "Roma school" (*Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí*, 2006).

Insofar as content is stipulated for the lower grades, it encourages pupils to identify with their immediate surroundings, and the Czech Republic as a whole, through the study of maps, experiences of travel, and the study of state symbols (MŠMT, 2007, p. 38). This encourages identification of the state with the geographical space that it occupies, lending credence to the idea that the two are somehow naturally congruent. It also places a strong emphasis of the Czech Republic's place in Europe, linking with the cross-curricular objective of developing *"vědomí evropské identity při respektování identity národní"*[107] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 97), and cultivating *"postoje k Evropě jako širší vlasti a ke světu jako globálnímu prostředí života"*[108] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 98). This is in keeping with the idea that returning to Europe symbolically through membership of the European Union was part of returning to "normality" after communism, and as such citizens should be encouraged to see themselves as Europeans as well as Czechs.

Myth and legend also feature prominently in the study of history in the early years (MŠMT, 2007, pp. 38-9). Again, exactly *which* myths and legends should be taught is not specified. However, there are several well-known myths of origin connected with the Kingdom of Bohemia such as *Libuše* and *Praotec Čech*[109]. It is difficult to imagine that these are not the myths and

[107] "an awareness of European identity while respecting national identities".
[108] "an understanding of Europe as their broader home".
[109] *Libuše* is the legendary ancestor of the Přemyslid dynasty. She was the youngest but wisest of three sisters and became queen after the death of their father. According to the legend, she prophesised and founded the city of Prague. *Praotec Čech* is another legendary ancestral figure of the Czechs, who brought his people to the Czech lands.

legends that the document's authors had in mind given that they appear even in textbooks of Czech for Foreigners (e.g. Holá and Bořilová, 2009). Whilst these are undoubtedly an important part of the nation's cultural narrative, by weakening the distinction between myth and history in this way, it is easy to see how the relative importance of myth and history may become conflated. As well as myth, the importance of commemorative events and objects is included in the subjects to be covered (MŠMT, 2007). Emphasizing the significance of such objects and events through the legitimizing framework of a curricular document stresses their symbolic value and ensures their importance is impressed upon pupils from an early age. Once again, this allows for the continuation of already dominant narratives of the nation's history.

Periodic reiterations of ethnic belonging, which "can so often find expression in xenophobia towards migrants and outsiders" (Smith, 2009, p. 20) mean that the ideas about belonging promulgated in schools must be considered carefully and the subject matter critically evaluated. This is especially important considering that the very process of commemoration is not without its critics; Reiff (2011) and Mock (2014) both present strong cases against public forms of commemoration, arguing that it perpetuates grievances and prevents cultures from moving beyond perceived historical injustices. As the actual events to be commemorated is not prescribed, this once more legitimizes passing on favoured narratives. It also means that the material taught is not able to be scrutinized and debated in the way that prescribed content might be. By relying on assumptions and consensus about what the nation and its history is, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] contributes to a widely held conception of the nation that is exclusive, ethnocentric, and to some extent founded in myth. The weak classification between myth and history, together with the lack of prescribed content means that these assumptions are likely to be reproduced in an education system that will continue to favour the middle-class of the dominant culture.

5.3.3.3 Multicultural Education in the Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání [RVP]

Whilst references to developing respect for other cultures is a stated aim of the thematic areas "*Člověk a jeho svět"* [110] and "*Člověk a společnost"*[111] it has its own strand in the mandatory cross-curricular subjects, and also forms a part of the cross-curricular area *"Výchova k myšlení v evropských a globálních souvislostech*"[112] The cross-curricular subjects are the least strongly framed and classified areas of the curriculum, and therefore most subject to existing cultural norms (Bernstein, 2000). Therefore, multicultural education is envisaged in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] as connecting to the subjects ranging from language and literature, geography, and ICT. This suggests that ideas and discussion of ethnicity and nationhood are expected to pervade much of the curriculum: *"Vazba na tyto oblasti je dána především tématy, která ze zabývají vzájemným vztahem mezi příslušníky různých národů a etnických skupin."*[113] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 99). By focusing on the relationships between different nations and ethnic groups this has the potential to help or hinder the promotion of inclusive conceptions of identity. This would depend on the individual schools' approaches, as it could involve learning about wars or ethnic conflicts in other parts of the world, positive examples of international co-operation, or systemic racism in the Czech Republic. The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] expresses the desirability of tolerance in very general terms but provides little concrete guidance on how this should be promoted across various subject areas. It is also unclear exactly how the term "multicultural" should be understood. As Modood points out, this is a contested term, which can "operate at three distinct levels: as an (implicit) sociology; as a political response; and as a vision of what is the whole into which difference is to be integrated" (Modood, 2014, p. 165). By looking at how the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] approaches the concept of

[110] "Man and his World".
[111] "Man and Society".
[112] "Thinking within European and Global Contexts".
[113] "Its ties to all these areas result primarily from themes focused on the relationship between various nations and ethnic groups".

multicultural education, this section explores underlying assumptions about what multiculturalism means in the Czech context.

There is a strong stated emphasis throughout the document on the importance of pupils recognizing the equal value of all people, languages, and cultures. However, the approach to language teaching in particular suggests that there is a hierarchy of desirability and prestige of different languages, with proficiency in English being a top priority, followed by German. For pupils wishing to undertake a second foreign language, they may choose from *"německý, francouzský, španělský, italský, ruský, slovenský, polský, případně jiný jazyk"*[114](MŠMT, 2007 p. 112). The order in which these are listed prioritizes Western European languages over Slavic languages, supporting Gramling's (2014) point that some foreign language proficiencies are valued more highly than others in relation to how much economic benefit they are likely to provide. This somewhat undermines the stated commitment to establishing "all" languages as being of equal value.

The individual pupil's responsibility for recognizing intolerance and racism and being aware of their own attitudes is also stressed (MŠMT, 2007, pp. 99-100). Whilst this is important, it ignores the fact that there may be structural or institutional racism and discrimination at work in society, thereby diminishing collective responsibility for tackling these. As Kalous notes, a tension arises between individual and collective responsibility: *"V demokratické společnosti by se děti měly učit samostatně myslet a rozhodovat, umět vést i podřídit se vedení, tolerovat rozdíly v názorech, spolupracovat s druhými na společném díle, respektovat práva ostatních.*[115] (2015, p. 220). In the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], pupils are to be encouraged to practice including people from other cultures as part of the "classroom collective". This may be effective when the classroom is a genuinely heterogeneous environment, but when many school districts continue to segregate Roma pupils, it may be difficult to use a strategy to encourage pupils to practice respecting the rights of others where difference is emphasized by segregation (European Roma Rights Centre, 2009).

[114] "German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Slovak, Polish or another language".
[115] "In a democratic society, children should learn to think and decide independently, to have leadership skills but also to be able to subordinate to leadership, to tolerate differences of opinion, to cooperate with others and to respect the rights of others".

In the light of Jarkovská et al.'s (2015) finding that Roma ethnicity is still regarded as an insurmountable barrier to inclusion among some teachers, the wording of the RVP is telling. The section in question is concerned with promoting the view that all ethnicities are of equal value:

> *"Etnický původ – rovnocennost všech etnických skupin a kultur; odlišnost lidí, ale i jejich vzájemná rovnost; postavení národnostních menšin; základní informace o různých etnických a kulturních skupinách žijících v české a evropské společnosti; různé způsoby života, odlišné myšlení a vnímání světa; projevy rasové nesnášenlivosti – jejich rozpoznávání a důvody vzniku"*[116] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 100).

Linking "different modes of thinking and ways of perceiving work" to ethnicity in this way echoes the view of one of the teachers that Roma perceive work differently to non-Roma: "'... their women simply do not work. For them, simply when a woman goes to work, she is a hooker … unless they begin to understand that it is normal to work, there is nothing we can do for the kids' (ES Purple, headmaster and deputy for first to ninth grade, 2013)" (cited in Jarkovská et al., 2015, p. 643). Correlating attitudes to work with ethnicity, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] implicitly legitimizes the discussion of certain traits being associated with certain ethnicities. Views like those mentioned here were highly prevalent in Jarkovská et al.'s study, and also arise in the empirical research undertaken for this study. This underscores the fact that perhaps more specific guidance might be required in order to prevent these assumptions being passed on to school children by teachers who might not be aware of their own cultural biases.

Balancing respect for other cultures is juxtaposed with the students' need to *"lépe uvědomovat i svoji vlastní kulturní identitu, tradice a hodnoty"*[117] (MŠMT, 2007, p. 99). There is no indication given here that this should particularly apply to the majority culture, but when taken together with the emphasis on national history in the "Humans and Society" thematic area, it is easy to see how this could favour members of the majority culture, being

[116] "Ethnic origin – equal value of all cultures and ethnic groups; differences and equality; the status of national minorities; basic information on various ethnic and cultural groups living in Europe and the Czech Republic; different lifestyles, different modes of thinking and ways of perceiving work; identifying expressions of racial intolerance – sources of intolerance"
[117] "better aware of their own cultural identity, traditions and values".

taught by members of that culture, particularly given the weakness of the framing of knowledge in this thematic area. The likelihood is that dominant traditions would be favoured over those belonging to minority cultures. An uncritical approach to upholding traditions for their own sake may be problematic in itself: “If religion is the opiate of the people, tradition is an even more sinister analgesic, simply because it rarely appears sinister” (Smith, 2000, p. 161). The importance of traditions as a counterweight to multiculturalism could simply camouflage a resistance to genuine inclusion that is “more sinister” because insidious and more emotionally evocative (because “homely” than grand narratives associated with religion or more overt nationalisms. Osler notes that in England, where multicultural education was undertaken in a piecemeal fashion without a national policy, it became squeezed out when reforms ushered a return to a more “traditional curriculum” (2013, pp. 41 - 42) If, in the Czech context, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] leaves the approach to multicultural education open to interpretation. Without a coherent national policy, the document allows for the Otherness of certain ethnic groups to be stressed, whilst the importance of “national” traditions is extolled. This has the potential to undermine the development of genuine multicultural education in Czech schools, as unless it is clearly prioritized, it could be set aside in favour of other areas of the curriculum, as happened in England.

The aims of promoting tolerance and multicultural values are prominent in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], both in the allocated cross-curricular area and pervading the thematic areas where it is concerned. However, weak classification and framing of this topic in the document means that the prioritization and implementation of this was largely left to individual schools and teachers. Whilst assumptions about ethnicity persist among educational professionals, the lack of concrete guidance in the documentation leaves room for the reproduction of existing prejudices, and despite the potential benefits of multicultural education, the hopes for implementation “largely remained on paper” (Katzorová, et al., 2008, p. 37).

5.3.3.4 Approaches to equality and inclusion in the Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání [RVP]

An individualized approach to education is endorsed by the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], in conjunction with the promotion of maintaining a level of heterogeneity among class groups for as long as possible (MŠMT, 2007, p. 7). The education of pupils with additional support needs is important when considering how Czech schools can influence identities and foster a sense of belonging, because in the official language of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], pupils are not disadvantaged due to their race, nationality or ethnicity, but rather have additional support needs stemming from "social disadvantage" or, particularly in the case of Roma pupils, "mild learning disabilities" (Jarkovská et al., 2015). Whilst the use of these terms may be helpful in resistance to the pathologizing of traits related to being a national Other, they also obfuscate what has been identified as ongoing and deeply embedded racial discrimination towards Roma (Amnesty International, 2015). It is worth remembering here that the power to label lies with the dominant group - the Other cannot choose whether or not to identify with the identity assigned to them by the dominant group (Modood, 2013, p. 37).

The commitment to inclusive education is broadly described in the following terms:

> *"Základní vzdělávání vyžaduje na 1. i na 2. stupni podnětné a tvůrčí školní prostředí, které stimuluje nejschopnější žáky, povzbuzuje méně nadané, chrání i podporuje žáky nejslabší a zajišťuje, aby se každé dítě prostřednictvím výuky přizpůsobené individuálním potřebám optimálně vyvíjelo v souladu s vlastními předpoklady pro vzdělávání."*[118] (MŠMT, 2007, no pagination).

This again raises pertinent questions such as: What are these needs? Who determines the adjustments? And what are the implications for pupils of following an "adjusted" curriculum? Once pupils are labelled with an "involuntary identity", it can be very difficult to overcome (Modood, 2013, p.

[118] "Elementary education at both Stages 1 and 2 requires a challenging and creative environment which stimulates the most gifted and talented pupils, encourages the less gifted ones and protects and supports the weakest pupils and which ensures that each child, through instruction adapted to his/her individual needs, develops optimally in accordance with his/her own learning capabilities" (MŠMT, 2007, p. 10).

37). The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] deals with two types of "Special Educational Needs" - those stemming from physical disabilities and those from "social disadvantage". The adjustments recommended for pupils with physically based needs are chiefly concerned with meeting the child's needs in accordance with his or her specific diagnosis whilst still providing an individualised and suitably differentiated curriculum according to their needs and abilities, removing barriers to this provision where necessary (MŠMT, 2007, no pagination). The definition of social disadvantage, on the other hand, has a strong ethnic, cultural and linguistic slant. In the RVP:

> *"Do této skupiny patří žáci, kteří pocházejí z prostředí sociálně nebo kulturně a jazykově odlišného od prostředí, v němž vyrůstají žáci pocházející z majoritní populace. Jsou to žáci z různých u nás již žijících menšin nebo žáci přicházející k nám v rámci migrace (především azylanti a účastníci řízení o udělení azylu). Počet těchto žáků se ve školách stále zvyšuje. Někteří z těchto žáků se bez závažnějších problémů integrují do běžné školy, jiní se mohou setkávat s různými obtížemi pro svou jazykovou odlišnost nebo proto, že jsou hluboce ovlivněni svými rodinami a jejich kulturními vzorci, projevujícími se v chování, jednání, odlišné hodnotové stupnici, stylu života, pojetí výchovy dětí, vztahu ke vzdělání apod. Žáci z rodinného prostředí s nízkým sociálně kulturním a ekonomickým postavením jsou častěji ohroženi sociálně patologickými jevy. Proto je nezbytné i všem těmto žákům věnovat specifickou péči v rozsahu, který potřebují."*[119] (MŠMT, 2007, no pagination).

The strategies recommended in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] for teaching such socially disadvantaged pupils

[119] "This group includes pupils from a background which is socially or culturally and linguistically different from the environment in which the pupils coming from the majority population grow up. These pupils either come from various minorities already living in the Czech Republic or come here within migration (primarily refugees and asylum-seekers). The number of such pupils in Czech schools keeps growing. Some such pupils integrate into common schools without serious problems while others may encounter various problems due to their linguistic difference or because of their being deeply influenced by their families and their cultural models, which are reflected in their behaviour, conduct, different ordering of values and lifestyle, concepts of child raising, attitude to education, etc. Pupils from families with low socio-cultural and economic standing are more frequently at risk of sociopathic phenomena. Consequently, it is necessary to provide all of these pupils with specific care to the extent which they need".

include “individual or group attention”, “preparatory classes”, and “specific textbooks and materials”, but leaves specific adjustments to be determined by individual schools. This means that pupils who have special educational needs for non-medical reasons could be subjected to a “differentiated” curriculum which in reality is restricted or reduced and is outlined in an appendix to the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]. As Race points out, “Within education, state policies control performance achievement in different ethnic groups” (2014, p. 231), and following a restricted curriculum has implications for pupils' access to the “legitimate” knowledge that is passed on in schools. This in turn impacts on their ability to acquire the academic and social capital required for successful functioning in society. Pupils who have followed this limited curriculum may also be disadvantaged when taking exams for entry to secondary education. The integration of pupils with special educational needs is identified as a “long-term objective” in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]. Like the White Paper, it appears to anticipate difficulties with its implementation. Emphasising the long-term nature of this again has the effect of de-prioritising its urgency, too.

The language used in to describe the nature of challenges faced by these “socially disadvantaged” pupils is also heavily value-laden and reflects an “Othering” at work. The idea that pupils may be so *“hluboce ovlivněni svými rodinami a jejich kulturními vzorci”*[120] that they cannot be accommodated without “specific attention” - normally in the form of segregation – reflects the assumption that pupils are socially disadvantaged because of their culture, not because the dominant culture discriminates against them. As Jarkovská et al. (2015) point out, these areas are the very ones where differences between Roma and Czech families are widely believed by education professionals prevent their successful integration as they are traits associated with Roma ethnicity and not social disadvantage more generally. The likely outcome is a failure of schools to promote multiculturalism in society, as they fail to encourage “social mixing and interaction” necessary for encouraging a “vision of commonalities, of what is shared across difference” (Modood, 2013, p. 60). The majority and minority cultures remain separate, but unequal.

The *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]’s commitment to inclusive education is somewhat undermined by the failure to

[120] “Deeply influenced by their families and their cultural models”.

address the specific racial inequalities that exist in Czech society, instead discussing them in general or euphemistic terminology. By failing to provide more specific guidance on *how* to undertake inclusive practices in education, and by annexing the issue, it seems that fully inclusive or multicultural education is seen almost as a distant pipedream, rather than a genuinely attainable goal. Nevertheless, the rights of all groups are acknowledged, and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] does, albeit in a lukewarm fashion, acknowledge the right of all children to equal access to education. Having this right is an important step in being able to exercise it.

5.4 Summary

This chapter examined the two major policy documents related to the reform of the Czech education system as the country prepared for EU membership. The first half of the chapter, Chapter 5.2, focused on the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], while the second half, Chapter 5.3, looked at the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP].

The chapter began by discussing the aims and objectives of education as outlined in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], which were focused on the de-politicisation of education and re-orienting the nation towards "Western" European norms. The structure of the white paper was then briefly discussed, noting that the areas prioritised were the compulsory part of education and the tertiary education sector. The goals and strategies promoted by the document were then considered. These were centred around promoting pupils' individual fulfilment, supporting the consolidation of democracy, encouraging appreciation of the "national" history and culture, and fostering connections between the nation and wider European culture. The approaches for inclusion in education advocated in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] were then discussed, along with potential challenges for making Czech education more inclusive, such as structural, cultural and attitudinal barriers.

The next section began by describing how the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] fits into the structure of education policies in the Czech Republic, before going on to discuss its aims and objectives. These were more detailed than those in the White Paper, but also to some extent, more culturally specific, focusing on "cultivated" forms of communication and behaviour. Next, the subjects for study and their

classification and framing were discussed. It was noted that the weaker classification and framing around the “civic competencies” and multicultural objectives made it more likely that pupils from the dominant culture would most likely find it easier to succeed in these areas. The priorities of language education are then discussed, showing how the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] promotes languages that are associated with economic benefits, such as English and German, and how this potentially squeezes out community languages. The linguistic priorities also reflect the re-orientation towards Europe. The promotion of multicultural attitudes and values in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] was then discussed, along with some of the assumptions and attitudes that the language of the document revealed. Finally, the chapter discussed how inclusion and equality are approached in the document , along with the potential implications of students considered to have “light mental disabilities” following a reduced curriculum.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, analyses a series of textbooks in order to explore the content of history and citizenship education based on the recommendations of these documents.

Chapter 6 Textbook Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the role of textbooks in Czech education. Following a brief discussion of the particular role of textbooks in education in Chapter 6.2, Chapter 6.3 analyses a series of four history textbooks spanning grades 6 – 9. Chapter 6.3.1 discusses the approach to history adopted by the textbooks' authors. 6.3.2, "Identity and Otherness" looks at how the textbooks promote Others is explored in 6.3.3, with particular focus on Roma, Germans, and Jews. The capacity of the textbooks to promote a European identity is considered in 6.3.4, and the ways in which the textbooks seek to promote personal values and skills development is examined in 6.3.5. The corresponding series of textbooks for citizenship education, by the same publisher, is analysed in chapter 6.4. The textbooks' authors' understanding of citizenship is discussed first in Chapter 6.4.1. The next section, 6.4.2 looks at how the Czech nation is represented in the textbooks, and how the books use history to help construct an image of the nation. The ways in which Others are represented in the citizenship textbooks is explored in 6.4.3. Chapter 6 ends with a summary, Chapter 6.5, which precedes discussion of the interviews in Chapter 7.

6.2 The Role of Textbooks

The White Paper set out a vision for Czech education that was to bring it in line with European norms in preparation for EU membership. Following the publication of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper], and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], materials began to be produced in the Czech Republic that sought to promote the educational objectives set out in these documents. These objectives included the promotion of social cohesion, transmission of the national culture, and eliminating racial inequality (MŠMT, 2001). It is a selection of these materials that are analysed in this chapter. An analysis of textbooks from after the Czech Republic joined the EU provides data that sheds further light on research question 3:

> **How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?**

It also provides an additional perspective on research question 1:

In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?

The document analysis in Chapter 5 showed how the prospect of EU membership steered the Czech education reform, strongly emphasizing skills development and the promotion of positive attitudes towards Others in their stated aims. In this chapter, the content of history and citizenship textbooks is analysed with reference to the goals of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] to see how these goals have been transposed into pedagogical materials. The analysis looks at how the approach of the textbooks to fulfilling the goals of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] seeks to impact pupils' views of history, society, and their place in it. It measures the content against the stated aims of the books themselves and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] to explore what assumptions are made about the intended audience and what ideas they transmit – both implicitly and explicitly – about identity, belonging, and what it means to be a Czech *and* a European citizen in the twenty-first century.

Textbooks are frequently assumed to play an important role in transmitting the official repository of a nation's history, and therefore in identity formation (Morgan, 2012). Crawford argues that "as they are based upon the cultural, ideological and political power of dominant groups, textbooks seek to enforce and reinforce cultural homogeneity; they seek to promote shared attitudes and shared historical memories" (2000, p. 2). An analysis of Czech textbooks used in the 1990s appears to suggest that this was the case in the Czech Republic (Projekt varianty, 2002). That analysis focused on the extent to which textbooks in all of the humanities and social-science subjects studied in basic education (History, Geography, *Prvouky* and *Vlastivěda*, Citizenship Education, Music, Czech Language and Literature) promoted the aim of *Interkulturní vzdělávání*[121] [IKV]. This study found that, of the textbooks in circulation during the late 1990s, most made some effort to further the aim of intercultural education. This was determined by the amount of content related to other cultures they contained and they extent to which they promoted positive attitudes towards them. At this time, 80% of history textbooks were

[121] "Intercultural education".

considered to “slightly” promote inter-cultural education, whilst 20% were found to be neutral; citizenship textbooks were more mixed, with 66.7% of those sampled likely to have a positive impact, 25% were neutral, and 8.3% of those sampled likely to be slightly damaging to the cause of inter-cultural education, containing mildly disparaging remarks about Others (ibid.). That so many of the textbooks in circulation either did not advance, or were likely to hinder, the promotion of positive attitudes towards diversity indicates that what was being taught in schools was likely to reinforce the cultural hegemony of the dominant group or fail to challenge it.

Textbooks are perhaps unique in their presumed capacity to transmit not only information, but attitudes, values, and a vision of the world. They are “some of the most widely used educational media” (Klerides, 2010, p. 31), yet they are also deeply complex in terms of content, purpose and audience. First of all, the juxtaposition of text and image commonly found in textbooks means that they convey meaning differently from narrative alone. As Bateman points out, combining text and image can result in a “multiplication of meaning” in which the resultant text using both media can carry a message quite different to that which can be read in either the text or image used alone (2014, pp. 5-8).This means that the combination of text and image can not only support, or add to, the idea contained in the text or image alone, but can alter it. In text-image combinations, the image often acts as a metonym of the idea it expresses (Barthes, 1977, p. 162), which has impacts on how the idea is interpreted. To use Kress’s example, if a complex idea such as “The Third World” is reduced to a couple of pictures denoting poverty (people rummaging in a tip) accompanied by assertions such as “Many people in the Third World have nothing”, then the “given” of the text – that the Third World is a problem distinct from the Northern European “normality” becomes clear (2006, p. 185). The pictures that denote poverty come to stand in for the Third World as a whole. Given that textbooks are primarily aimed at schoolchildren, asking them to critically analyse how the textbooks convey meaning to them is a tall order. The imbalance inherent in the pedagogical relationship means that the textbook and its contents are symbolically imbued with authority.

This effect can be compounded by the language deployed in the textbook, such as the use of deixis. This can have implications beyond the ostensible meaning of the text, which is revealed through the “tenor” of the text, which comprises the voices of the various stakeholders involved in the

production of the text, and can reveal the beliefs and assumptions that underpin the textbook (Nichol and Dean, 2003). The use of “we” and “us” to address the reader is the most obvious example of this. This deixis reveals the assumption that the reader is part of a particular social group, to which the authors also belong. Others (for example, those belonging to the “problematic” Third World”) are assumed to be outside of this group. Although the group in question is not necessarily the “national” group, the disparity between the position of the author and their intended audience, this is a convincing interpretation. This is especially the case when considered alongside the fact that textbooks are commonly written in the titular language of the state and, “as instruments of ideological transformation and nation building are closely monitored by the state” (Zajda, 2009, p. 276) through their approval for use in national education systems.

The selection of content to be included in a textbook can be influenced by a range of factors beyond the authors’ intention, such as the implementation of a national curriculum, or changes in technology, such as increased demand for online resources (Nichol and Dean, 2003). In this way, textbooks are both a product of the environment in which they are produced and their authors’ agenda, creating a discourse that “produces, reproduces, and sustains; challenges, transforms, and dismantles reality in certain ways” (Klerides, 2010). They are not simple purveyors of information, but an active part of constructing the discourses they aim to teach about.

Coupled with the fact that they are written to be consumed primarily by children, yet purchased by teachers and schools, means that textbooks must cater to the tastes of these different audiences simultaneously, being comprehensible to the former, yet appealing to the latter (Nichol and Dean, 2003). They must mediate between the two, and risk alienating teachers by adopting an approach that seems too radical or unfamiliar. History textbooks, therefore, must navigate a wide range of cultural, ideological, and pedagogical demands when constructing an image of the past.

6.3 History Textbooks

This section focuses on the analysis of history textbooks from the Fraus series. First of all, section 6.3.1 describes how the textbooks approach the subject, and discusses the relative merits of a linear chronological approach versus a

topic-based approach. The next section, 6.3.2 discusses representations of diversity in the textbooks, and section 6.3.3 looks at representations of Czechs' significant Others. How the textbooks attempt to promote a sense of European identity is discussed in 6.3.4, while the following section considers the skills and values the textbooks seek to promote. The section concludes with a short reflection on the history textbooks.

6.3.1 Approach to History

The covers of the history textbooks stand outside of the main text of the textbooks, forming a part of the books' "paratext", the function of which is to "surround and prolong it, precisely in order to *present* it" (Genette and Maclean, 1991, p. 261). In this series, the subject matter is strongly classified by the title *Dějepis* and the function - *učebnice* - delineated below that. The intended audience is signalled in two ways: firstly, the type of institutions the book is appropriate for – both elementary school and the more academic multi-year *gymnázium*. Emphasizing this on the cover, the books' prestige is enhanced by communicating that its contents are suitable for both contexts could be read as an assertion of the academic quality of the contents. It also communicates that the same history is to be taught to students in both types of school. The intended audience is further defined by a number, printed very large, denoting the grade of basic school for which the book is intended. This may partly be for pragmatic reasons (Kress, 2006, p. 41) - the books in the series all share the same colour and layout, so having the numbers writ large makes it easier to make sure the correct books are distributed to students. However, it also symbolically communicates that the content is what the authors expect the students to be familiar with by the end of that stage of education. In this way, a body of knowledge is packaged for consumption and mastery by the target audience.

The textbook covers, taken together, also reveal that their authors take a linear-chronological approach to the ordering of material. The linear approach may seem logical, as it presents events more or less in the order in which they took place. However, it has been criticized, as pupils taught in this way are much less likely to have a good understanding of material they have learned at an early age, and have on the whole "less satisfying educational experiences" (Beecher, 1999, p. 38). This approach also runs the risk of

ignoring parallel narratives and favouring one version of history (usually one which casts the nation in a favourable light). When Michael Gove sought to reform the UK curriculum along these lines, favouring English history, the outcry was that it was an outmoded and ineffective method of teaching for a multi-cultural society (Mansell, 2013). Gove's defence that pupils should be familiar with a coherent “narrative of British progress” did little to allay fears that this was an attempt to reform the curriculum along nationalist and elitist lines (Sellgren, 2013). In the case of these Czech textbooks, however, it seems that this is not the case – not only temporally, but also geographically distant cultures are represented on the covers of the books:

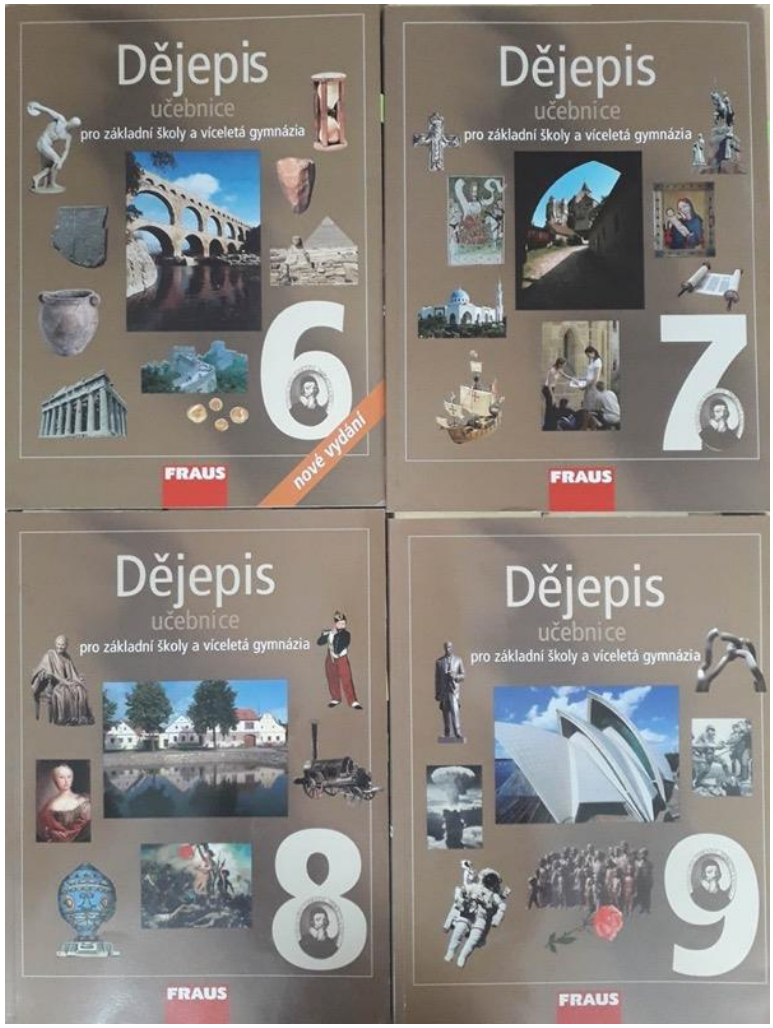


Figure 6.1: Covers of history textbooks

What is interesting, however, is the tendency to study more geographically or culturally remote cultures from a more remote temporal perspective. For example, non-European regions, such as China, India, Egypt, and the Middle East are all studied in the sixth grade, and only the pre-modern period is covered. As Beecher (1999) points out, teaching about these cultures early in

students' education might mean that these topics (and by extension the cultures they relate to) are likely to be less well understood than topics covered later. In the latter years of compulsory education, the more recent past is covered, and the topics focus on Czech or Western history.

The alternative to the linear-chronological approach, teaching by topic or theme, is to group events by topic or theme, for example, "revolution". This would allow teachers to make use of their own areas of interest or expertise (Beecher, 1999), but would present challenges for textbook publishers or syllabus authors, who would still have to make decisions about what content to include – for example could the Russian revolution be more instructive than the Iranian Revolution? Or the French? If many revolutions are to be included, how much depth should each be accorded? And would any comparisons between them be valid? Furthermore, such an approach represents a weakening of classification that Bernstein (2000) identified as favouring the dominant group, albeit more subtly than Gove's preferred approach.

6.3.2 Identity and Otherness: how Textbooks Promote Identification with the Czech Nation

The front covers of the textbooks contain much else of symbolic significance. Each of them has a large central image surrounded by a series of objects representing some of the historical eras covered in the book. In or near each of the numbers denoting the year the textbook is aimed at is a small portrait of Jan Amos Komenský.

Figure 6.2: Portrait of Komenský from textbook covers

The significance of including a portrait of Komenský on each cover should not be overlooked. Not only was he an important figure in Czech culture, but a

philosopher, theologian, and pedagogue of international renown, and his ideas about education are referred to as “centuries ahead of his time” (Dobinson, 1970) and many of his principles form the basis of modern education systems across the world. The recurrence of his portrait – small, but prominently displayed – serves to remind readers of the influence of the man beyond the nation. In this way, the idea of “progressiveness” in education - in particular the idea that it should be accessible for all, regardless of gender, origin, or class – is communicated as something naturally belonging to the Czech nation.

Komenský is a significant intellectual influence and role model, but his status as an exile, fleeing religious persecution from the Habsburg regime, brings another layer of symbolic meaning. Tied up with this is the idea of rebellion against authority, exile, the victim of occupation – all themes that have been associated with Czech identity and exploited for political ends at various points in the nation’s history, contributing to the self-perception that the Czech nation is inherently liberal, progressive, and intellectual. Whilst these characteristics may be conspicuously absent in individual Czechs, attributing them to the nations revered historical figures means that the Czech nation can possess these attributes, even if not all Czech people do (Holý, 1996). By placing Komenský’s portrait on the covers of textbooks, the publishers remind readers of his place in Czech history, thus contributing to the legitimization of the idea of Czech nation as historically persecuted, yet resistant to oppression.

Historical events and figures can be re-interpreted and are given new meanings according to contemporary events, and interpretations of the past can be endorsed as legitimate or otherwise by their presence in state school curricula. Two such examples from Czech history are Jan Hus and the Battle of White Mountain which, despite their temporal distance, still occupy a central place in Czech national consciousness. Hus was a priest and Protestant reformer who was burned at the stake for heresy. After his death, his followers fought against papal crusades in what became known as the Hussite Wars. Whilst undoubtedly an important figure in Czech, and indeed European history, his legacy has come to occupy a central role in Czech national mythology in which, at different times, his image has been used to remind Czechs of a great independent “national” past – from the national awakening to the present day. During the communist period, he was painted as a

revolutionary figure who fought for the common man, and his importance as a religious figure was diminished to fit a Marxist narrative (Holý, 1996). The importance of his place in the contemporary national narrative is demonstrated by the fact that he occupied seventh place in a 2005 poll of “greatest Czechs” conducted by the public service broadcaster Czech Television (Česká televize, 2014).

The main year for study of this period at primary school is seventh grade, when pupils are 12-13 years old. In the history textbook for this year, Hus has four pages out of a fifteen-page chapter on the late medieval period devoted to him, a substantial proportion, given that most topics are covered in a two-page spread. Regarding content, Hus and his teachings are placed in the wider context of problems and corruption within the church. Wycliffe's influence on Hus is prominently referred to, as is the popularity of Hus's ideas with the Czech people, again locating Czech history in a wider Western European context and associating progressiveness with the national character. Images in textbooks are generally used to illustrate, decorate, and convey information (Kress, 2006, p. 16), but in this case they also amplify the message of the text. Corruption in the Catholic church is illustrated by a medieval depiction of the Pope with clawed feet. Using an image from the middle-ages communicates the notion that this is how some people in the Middle Ages viewed the pontiff, but the text and caption ignore the propagandistic nature of the image, which is not discussed. The “rightness” of Hus’s cause is thus reinforced. As much attention is given to Hus's trial and death as to his life, emphasizing his martyr-like status. Although the descriptions of events are not emotive, his execution is illustrated by a drawing from the period, showing Hus sitting stoically as flames rage around him. Such medieval imagery is juxtaposed with contemporary photographs and references, which suggest links with modern day protest:

Figure 6.3: Representing radicalism? (Hrdlička and Kalistová, 2009, p. 87).

If the general purpose of images in textbooks is to decorate, illustrate, or inform (Kress, 2006), then the inclusion of this image is puzzling. It is certainly not decorative, showing a tatty flier taped to a lamppost. The "radical" nature of the flier seems trivial - it has a homemade look about it, which might limit its impact. Neither is it informative - the text on the poster is unclear in the image, and there is no information about what cause the flier is promoting. The accompanying text sheds some light on its purpose: *"Radikální postup na prosazu je často zásadní bez ohledu na podmínky"*[122] reads the text on top; the text underneath asks *"V čem je tento čin radikální? Čeho chce takový protest dosáhnout?"*[123]*.*The text addresses the reader directly, posing a challenge and perhaps aiming to promote discussion of different methods of protest. Given that the text is likely to be read from top to bottom (Kress, 2006, p. 192), the encouragement is to admire radical actions - in this case, those of Hus. The overall depiction of Hus is that of a heroic radical who wished to reform society. This is given greater importance than his status as a religious leader - students are asked to consider his impact on Czech society rather than on the church. However, the side panels, which invite students to compare Hus's actions to modern-day protests reinforce the idea that his actions remain relevant to Czech society.

Of similar symbolic significance to Hus in Czech culture, the Battle of White Mountain was fought on a hill in what is now part of Prague in 1620, near the beginning of the Thirty Years War. By this time, much of the population of Bohemia was Protestant. The Bohemian forces were routed by the forces of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and the German Catholic League (whom the Bohemians outnumbered by about 3000). This battle saw Catholic power consolidated in the Czech lands and led to the departure of much of the protestant aristocracy. Its symbolic importance was used to further a nationalist agenda, during the National Revival and into the twentieth century (Heimann 2009). In the Fraus series of textbooks, White Mountain is also studied in the seventh grade and is allocated a similar amount of space to Hus. The battle itself is only briefly described, whilst its consequences are detailed

[122] "Radical action is often crucial, without consideration of the conditions".
[123] "What makes this radical? What does such a protest want to accomplish?"

more emotively with references to the punishment meted out to the rebels, including the knights, townspeople and even women sentenced to death. Similarly emotive is the picture accompanying the question that invites pupils to make links with the present - a crying refugee woman carrying a child accompanied by the caption “For what reasons do people today flee their homeland?”:

Figure 6.4: Encouraging empathy with the past (Koldinská and Zálohová, 2009, p. 136).

Using a photograph points the reader towards the assumption this is a depiction of a real-life situation. This photograph contrasts with the drawings and engravings that are included in the main text. It looks un-posed and realistic, which would be consistent with it having a documentary function in the text, conveying information to the viewer. However, there is no information given about the context in which the photograph was taken. The frontal angle of the shot clearly shows the distress on the woman’s face, while the obstruction in the foreground suggests that the picture was snapped during a chaotic event – the people in the picture perhaps fleeing danger in a hurry, giving the picture an air of desperation. However, in the absence of guiding contextual information, the reader is left to generalize that the emotion and atmosphere in the picture is indicative of the experience of refugees. Those in the picture become a metaphor for the migrant experience in general, including those Protestants that fled Bohemia after the battle of White

Mountain. This might encourage pupils to empathize with the medieval Czech aristocracy in the way that they might with a modern refugee. However, this decontextualized image also shows those leaving their homeland as desperate, endangered, and distressed, while the caption asks readers to consider the reasons that people might leave their homeland - in the normal course of events these might include personal or economic reasons, rather than fleeing danger or persecution. However, the positioning of the image in the panel next to a block of text describing the exodus of Protestant aristocracy points the reader towards the conclusion that people are compelled to leave their homelands only in dire situations. It is also worth noting that the refugees in the image are all white. Representation of racial diversity in textbooks is generally considered important (Garcia, 1993), but this needs to be done in such a way as not to promote stereotypes or emphasize Otherness (Kress, 2006). It is often said that children “can’t be what they can’t see” and that schoolbooks should present children with relatable role-models (Wright Edelman, 2015). However, if the textbook is addressing what is assumed to be a predominantly white, Czech audience, the depiction of white refugees might convey the message that such circumstances do not just befall Others, but to people like “us”. This might either encourage empathy with present day victims of conflict or may re-iterate the narrative of Czechs’ historical victimhood.

The joint significance of the death of Hus and the defeat at White Mountain is that they are both simultaneously heroic and anti-heroic “symbols of defeat”. They are the mitigating circumstances that excuse moral transgressions during times of struggle and explain the failure of the nation to reach its potential, as they are the points at which it is thrown off course by outside forces. Mock (2014) argues that great national defeats and they ways in which they are remembered, are at least as useful as glorious victories in constructing national narratives as they generally allow more scope for unity against a common enemy. As the four-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of White Mountain approaches in 2020, it continues to be commemorated in new and creative ways, lending support to the idea that it continues to be central to the modern Czech nation and its citizens. 2014 saw the unveiling of a new memorial to the fallen soldiers of the battle. It is fiercely contemporary in its conception, which includes elements of music and architecture. This unveiling was accompanied by a series of lectures, concerts, and masses which,

according to one Czech news channel, were intended to “refresh memories of the battle” (Česká televize, 2014). Therefore, the fairly measured approach of the textbooks to these highly symbolic moments of history must be considered in the context of ongoing and much more sentimental, yet still officially endorsed, commemoration such as this.

6.3.3 Representation of Significant Others in the Textbooks

The *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] specifically identifies education about Roma, Jews, and Germans as important in the promotion of multi-cultural education:

> *Tyto úkoly se koncentrují do výchovy k lidským právům a multikulturalitě, která na základě poskytování věcných informací o všech menšinách, zejména romské, židovské a německé, jejich osudech a kultuře, utváří vztahy porozumění a sounáležitosti s nimi”*[124] (MŠMT, 2001, p. 14).

This section discusses how each of these groups in turn are represented in the textbooks and considers the potential impact of this representation on promoting equality.

6.3.3.1 Roma

References to Roma are fairly few and far between, considering that there have been Roma in the Czech lands at least since the fifteenth century. The grade eight textbook (for age 13-14), which covers the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, makes no reference at all to Roma, nor does the grade six textbook that covers ancient civilizations. The grade 9 textbook contains only a few fleeting mentions of Roma, mostly in relation to the events of the Second World War. In the grade seven textbook, which has the most information about Roma, the majority of this information is confined to a two-page spread – a “Roma chapter” of sorts. Whilst this is an average amount of space devoted to a given topic, it underlines the fact that the history of the Roma is still considered something separate, outside of the “national” narrative, a tokenistic approach that Apple (1993) points out reflects the

[124] “[multicultural education] is based on providing factual information on all minorities, especially the Romany, Jewish and German ones, and their fates and cultures, and shaping the relations of understanding and solidarity”.

balance of power in society. Other mentions are brief, and do not help to promote the view that the history of Roma people is an integral part of Czech or even European history, instead filtering their representation through the lens of the dominant culture.

A map depicts the westward movement of Roma people, with arrows showing the routes taken to Europe through Armenia and the Byzantine Empire. The map has no state borders drawn, which means that there is no temporal location for the movement depicted. It is unclear to the viewer whether this is an ongoing process. This emphasizes an Oriental exoticism and could contribute to a perception of Roma as Others.

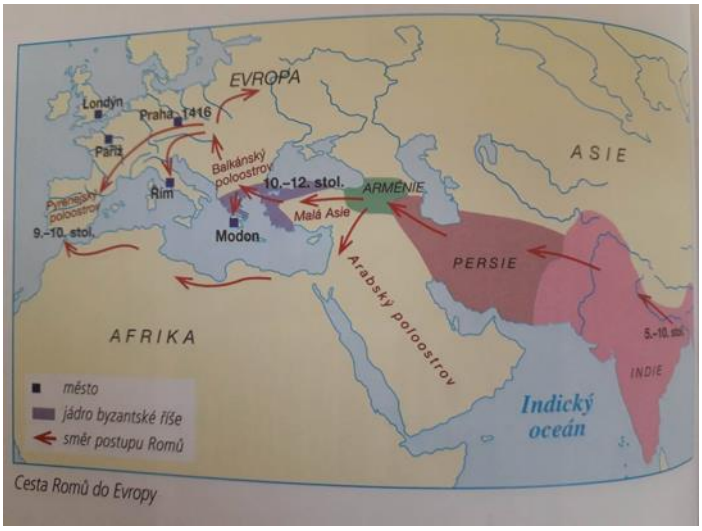


Figure 6.5: Movement of Roma to Europe (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78).

The Othering process is furthered in the side panel. An aerial image of the archaeological site of Mohenjo-daro appears near the top of the page, and its relevance is not immediately obvious.

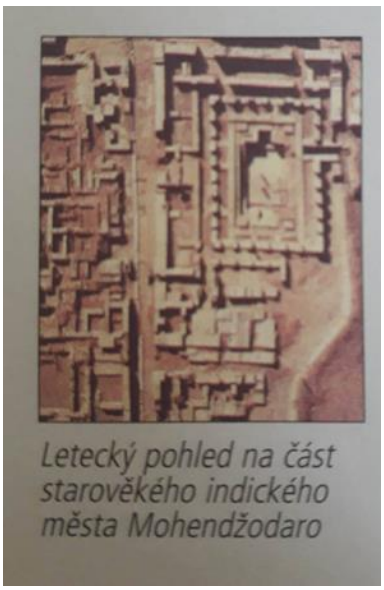


Figure 6.6: Aerial view of Mohenjo-daro (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78).

It is captioned as a *"Letecký pohled na část starověkého indického města Mohendžodaro"*[125] (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78) which provides anchorage to explain the content of the image, but does not explain its salience. However, in the next piece of text in the panel, the reader is reminded that *"Předkové dnešních Romů patřili k původním obyvatelům Indie. Jejich vyspělé památky dodnes vzbuzují obdiv"*[126] (ibid.). Through this text, which advances the meaning of the image further to the reader, the Oriental origins of Roma are emphasised, while the reader is directed in their interpretation of the image towards admiration of the site in the picture. Directing the reader towards "admiration" of the site, without reference to Romany people or culture to accompany it - besides it being in a place that their ancestors originated – seems to signal effort at a positive depiction of Roma. However, in the context of systemic discrimination against this group in the Czech Republic (e.g. Amnesty International, 2010), it appears rather weak and tokenistic.

A somewhat Romantic vision of Roma history is provided by a sepia-coloured drawing of a ragged character at work. The image is not captioned but is accompanied by an extract from the travel diary of the fifteenth-century German traveller Arnold von Harff, and describes a Roma couple working together in Modon, Greece.

6.7 Drawing of a Roma man working at an anvil (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78).

The selection of this source to accompany the picture does not anchor the image as a caption might. Rather, linking the two is left to the reader who is prompted to compare the text to the image, which is a rather stereotypical one

[125] "Aerial view of part of the ancient Indian city Mohenjo-daro".
[126] "The ancestors of today's Roma were indigenous to India. Their advanced monuments still provoke wonder".

of the "tinker"[127], but the primary source used in accompaniment lends legitimacy to this representation. Another illustration of a Roma family, dating from the fifteenth century is used on the next page, which is similar in colour and style to the above. Using drawings to represent Roma in the past adds an element of unreality to the people depicted; the lack of historical photographs of Roma people leaves only a Romanticised representation of Roma history available to the reader. This is only reinforced by a similarly sepia-tinged photograph (dated from the first half of the twentieth century) of some wagons, the figures in the picture tiny and indistinct. Although the wagon photograph and the drawings are spread across the two pages, their similar colouring provides an element of visual continuity, and carries connotations of a dreamlike quality, which is conferred to that which is depicted.

A less rugged, but no less Romanticised representation is provided by Boccacino's sixteenth century painting *Gypsy Girl*, which shows a pale-skinned, blue-eyed young woman wearing simple clothes with her head wrapped with a shawl. Much like the improbably blonde Virgin Mary or the blue-eyed Christ of Renaissance paintings, this "gypsy girl" here is "idealised" to the point of unrecognizability.

6.8 "Portrait of a Roma Girl" by Boccacino *(Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 79)*

Without the caption, it would be difficult for the reader to identify this image with the people of Indian origins having an *"odlišný vzhled"*[128] (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78) described in the text. Although the painting is generally known as "Gypsy Girl" in English, the image is carefully captioned *"Portrét romské dívky"* (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 79), the text having provided some explanation of

[127] The term "tinker" can be used either to describe "a person who makes a living by travelling from place to place mending pans and other metal utensils.", but has also been used historically as a derogatory term for someone "living in an itinerant community" (OED Online, 2020)

[128] "different appearance".

why the common Czech term for Roma *"cikáni"*[129] is considered pejorative thanks to earlier associations with cults and witchcraft. This demonstrates some awareness of the importance of labels when referring to minority groups (Velímský, et al., 2009, pp. 78-79).

This Romanticised historical image of Roma is implicitly contrasted with modern Roma culture through the juxtaposition of the historical images with two colour photographs of Roma. The first of these is a photograph of the Czech Eurovision entry from 2009, a Romany rap-outfit called "Gipsy.cz".

Figure 6.9: Representing Roma
"What Roma artists do you know? Why is Roma music popular across the world?" (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78)

There is no caption labelling the image. However, the text underneath invites pupils to speculate about why Romany music is popular internationally. The "Roma-ness" of the people in the picture is either assumed to either be prior knowledge that students are expected to be familiar with or they are expected to assume either from context of the Roma chapter or visual cues. Unfortunately, the group in question performed poorly in Eurovision, receiving *nul points* from twenty countries in the first semi-final for the song *Aven Romale* (Come in, Gypsies), which contains such inspiring lyrics as:

> *"Aven Romale! If you really wanna understand, just sing it with me, dadada. Aven Romale I can make you really feel like Gipsy. A da da da"* (Banga, 2009)

Although a fun group, and popular in the Czech Republic as well as internationally, the self-parodying nature of the song (and the performance, which sees the lead singer don a cape in the role of "Super Gipsy"), raises the

[129] "Gypsy".

question of whether more serious output from the Roma community would be equally well regarded by the Czech mainstream media. The contrast between the Romantic gypsy images of the past with the "realness" of the photograph of Gipsy.cz might be an attempt to depict different, positive aspects of modern Roma culture, although still managing to reinforce the stereotype of Roma as an *"etnikum s hlubokým hudebním cítěním"*[130], which is common in Czech media (Svoboda, 2008, p. 8).

The second colour photograph depicts a smiling, dark-skinned family posing for a picture in a comfortable-looking living room, filled with ornaments and trinkets. This looks to be a typical nuclear family – a mother, father, boy and girl:

6.10: A typical family? (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 79).

The image is not captioned; again, it is left to the reader to surmise that this is a Roma family in the picture. The accompanying text invites the reader to consider the following: *"Ačkoliv si lidé všímají především odlišností, ve skutečnosti je to nejdůležitější pro všechny společné. Na čem asi záleží rodině na fotografii?"*[131]. The relay provided by this text results in the "meaning multiplication" (Kress, 2006, p. 5) that moves the picture from merely representing a Roma family to one that (probably) values being together. Implicit here is the assumption that the (Czech) reader will identify and relate to this image and recognise the commonality of the family over any differences of appearance. Although this representation of Roma life could be seen as an attempt to counter the standard depictions in Czech media, in which Roma *"často objevují jen ve svou polohách, a to buď jako nesocializované osoby*

[130] "An ethnicity with a deep musical sensibility".
[131] "Although people are most aware of differences, in reality the most important things are common to everyone. What does the family in the photo care about?".

pustošící holobyty a přidělávající starosti okolním usedlíkům"[132] (Svoboda, 2008, p. 8). However, the combination of Gipsy.cz and this simplistic representation of "ideal" family life have to stand in for the whole of modern Roma culture, while Roma history is reduced to the ragged but noble outsider of the drawings. These metonymic representations fail to convey an impression of richness, complexity, or integrated-ness with Czech history as a whole.

Finally, the sidebar of the right of the Roma section depicts a rather simple looking fellow in raggedy clothes. This is in fact a Viennese caricature of a Czech, which is included in the main section on Romany culture directly below the Roma flag symbol. Its inclusion is ostensibly to point out that discrimination and stereotypes can apply to all peoples and cultures, including Czechs.

Figure 6.11: Appropriating victimhood? "Czech in a Viennese caricature from the end of the 19th Century" (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 79).

The text underneath reads "Prejudices are associated with all nations, including Czechs. Why do so many people so often focus on others' faults?" Whilst the question itself is valid and relevant, by introducing the question in this way the place of victimhood from prejudice is shifted from Roma to Czechs. This is an uncomfortable example of the dominant culture moving into the space of the minority and does not force users of the textbook to confront the issue of prejudice towards Roma directly, but instead allows it to become part of a more general discussion. In this way, the issue of racism towards Roma is sidestepped, and an opportunity to advance an anti-racist position is missed.

[132] "They often appear only in their own areas as unsocialised people ravaging the bare apartment blocks and worrying the neighbours"

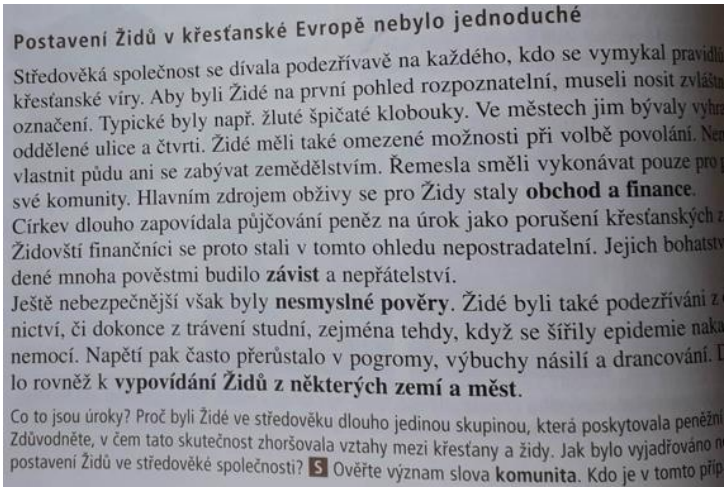
6.3.3.2 Jews

Jewish history is far better represented than Romany culture. It is represented in all four of the textbooks analysed and is generally better integrated into the main narrative of European and Czech history. As well as having dedicated sections, references to Jewish culture are distributed throughout the textbooks, giving the overall impression of Jewish culture being integral to the national story.

The situation of Jews in the Middle Ages, especially in the Czech Lands is depicted in some detail in the grade seven textbook and includes reference to early examples of discrimination and anti-Semitism. For example, a fourteenth century illustration of the groups of people under the protection of the king includes priests, married women, unmarried women, and Jews.

Figure 6.12: Apart from the Others (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 71).

The Jewish figure stands separate from the rest, emphasizing his Otherness, and pupils are asked to consider about why he may have been depicted in this way. The main body of text in this section whilst factual in its content is somewhat problematic in the way it is presented:



Postavení Židů v křesťanské Evropě nebylo jednoduché

Středověká společnost se dívala podezřívavě na každého, kdo se vymykal pravidl
křesťanské víry. Aby byli Židé na první pohled rozpoznatelní, museli nosit zvlášt
označení. Typické byly např. žluté špičaté klobouky. Ve městech jim bývaly vyhr
oddělené ulice a čtvrti. Židé měli také omezené možnosti při volbě povolání. Ne
vlastnit půdu ani se zabývat zemědělstvím. Řemesla směli vykonávat pouze pro
své komunity. Hlavním zdrojem obživy se pro Židy staly **obchod a finance**.
Církev dlouho zapovídala půjčování peněz na úrok jako porušení křesťanských
Židovští finančníci se proto stali v tomto ohledu nepostradatelní. Jejich bohatst
dené mnoha pověstmi budilo **závist** a nepřátelství.
Ještě nebezpečnější však byly **nesmyslné pověry**. Židé byli také podezříváni z
nictví, či dokonce z trávení studní, zejména tehdy, když se šířily epidemie naka
nemocí. Napětí pak často přerůstalo v pogromy, výbuchy násilí a drancování.
lo rovněž k **vypovídání Židů z některých zemí a měst**.

Co to jsou úroky? Proč byli Židé ve středověku dlouho jedinou skupinou, která poskytovala peněžn
Zdůvodněte, v čem tato skutečnost zhoršovala vztahy mezi křesťany a židy. Jak bylo vyjadřováno n
postavení Židů ve středověké společnosti? S Ověřte význam slova **komunita**. Kdo je v tomto příp

Figure 6.13: Problematic formatting (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 70).

The emboldened text, which we may assume are highlighted because they are thought to be of particular relevance or importance are: “business and finance”, “envy”, “nonsensical beliefs”, “expulsion from some countries and cities”. Whilst the text points out that this is because Judaism permitted money-lending which was forbidden for Christians, the association of Jewishness with financial institutions is unhelpful and may create (and legitimize) connections with anti-Semitic stereotypes which pupils may encounter elsewhere. The impact of this is compounded by the images in the sidebar, which depicts Orthodox Jews praying at the Western Wall above a picture of the Czech National Bank.

Figure 6.14: An odd juxtaposition of images (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 70).

The position of these images on the left-hand side of the page is important to how the text is read. As Kress (2006) points out, the left-hand side of the page in a multi-modal text such as a textbook tends to contain information that is “given”, assumed or already known, with new information presented further to the right. This convention is alluded to in the paratext of the book – on the

inside of the front cover there is a labelled double page spread from the textbook, explaining the constituent parts. The panels on the left contain "*Informace, které jsi už slyšel(a) nebo uslyšíš v jiných předmětech*"[133]. This suggests that the textbook's authors assume that pupils will have encountered stereotypes associating Jewish people with financial institutions. The accompanying text on the right does not challenge these associations, but rather uses the emboldened text to emphasize the salience of this information.

As well as these issues of problematic formatting, there is another example of a caricature being used to relate prejudice towards the minority group to discrimination against Czechs in the grade 8 textbook:

Figure 6.15: Anti-Semitic caricature of Masaryk (Novotný and Korcová, 2010, p. 109).

This picture shows an anti-Semitic cartoon of Tomas Masaryk from around the year 1900. During this time ethnic tensions were high in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and expressions of anti-Semitism, including blood libel, "coincided with increased expressions of Czech nationalism" (Curtis, 2013, p. 131), and Jews may have been "viewed by Czech nationalists as unreliable partners in the national struggle" (Kieval, 2010). In the cartoon above, Masaryk is shown as a Rabbi, reading from the Talmud with the caption *"měl by se ucházet spiš o haličský mandát po rabínu Blochovi, aby orthodoxní měli na říšskéřádného zastánce. Příslušný ornát i pejzy dodali mu již v Kolomyji"*[134] (Novotný and Korcová, 2010, p. 109) - the implication being that he was more

[133] "Information you have already heard or hear about in other subjects".
[134] "Perhaps he should seek a Galician Mandate, in the manner of the Rabbi Bloch, so that the Orthodox would have a good advocate in the Empire. In Kolomyi they would provide him with the appropriate chasuble and ringlets".

concerned with protecting Jewish interests than furthering the Czech national agenda.

Depictions of Masaryk as a “traitor to the nation” (Kieval, 2010) were common after he intervened in support of the defendant in the murder trial of Leopold Hilsner. The trial concerned the murder of a Czech girl in the town of Polná, and rumours soon spread, supported by the press, that it had been a Jewish ritual murder (Curtis, 2013, p. 129). The Jewish vagrant, Hilsner was wrongly accused, and although the evidence against him was highly circumstantial and heavily criticised – including detailed criticism by Masaryk - Hilsner was convicted of the murder, plus one other, and sentenced to death (although this was later commuted to life imprisonment). He was eventually pardoned by the Emperor Charles I in 1918.

This case is an important chapter in Czech-Jewish relations, as it not only demonstrates the consequences of anti-Semitism for an individual, but the tension and speculation surrounding the case, stoked by the press, led to anti-Semitic riots in Bohemia and a proliferation of blood-libel in the following decades (Kieval, 2010). This underlines the fact that anti-Semitic attitudes and acts had been widespread in the Czech lands long before the establishment of the Protectorate. Curtis argues that Masaryk’s intervention in the Hilsner trial did not stem from any personal philo-Semitism, but the fact that he “regarded the ritual-murder accusation as a disgrace, and because the issue was one of human rights” (2013, p. 139). Although he suffered some professional consequences as a result his involvement in the case (Kieval, 2010), it did not stand in the way of his becoming the first president of Czechoslovakia and one of the nation’s founding figures, who is nowadays regarded as something of a national hero.

With this in mind, the inclusion of this caricature is difficult to interpret. On the one hand, it highlights the absurdity of anti-Semitic views and shows that Czechs also engaged in anti-Semitism; on the other hand, by showing anti-Semitism directed towards a man often referred to as the “Father of the Nation”, once again allows the Czech nation to occupy the place of the victim, alongside the minority. The latter interpretation is rather more convincing, as the accompanying text does not provide any reference to the Hilsner affair directly, but refers to anti-Semitism more generally, with an emphasis on

Masaryk's opposition to *"nebezpečné pověře"*[135] (Novotný and Korcová, 2010, p. 109), such as anti-Semitism. The caption providing the reader with the anchorage to interpret the image states only that it is *"Česká antisemitská karikatura Tomáše Garrigua Masaryka (r. 1900)"*[136](ibid.), thereby focusing the reader's attention on the fact that Masaryk was subject to anti-Semitism himself as a result of his objections to it.

A picture of child prisoners in Auschwitz appears in the in the side panel on the to the right of the Masaryk caricature:

Figure 6.16: "Children in Auschwitz during WWII" (Novotný and Korcová, 2010, p. 109).

This positioning suggests a connection between the anti-Semitism of the caricature and that which led to the genocide of European Jews in the twentieth century. On the one hand, this could be seen as placing the events of the Shoah in a wider narrative of anti-Semitism, an important part of contextualising it and showing it as a process rather than a freak occurrence masterminded by an evil individual (Lindquist, 2009). It also avoids representing the events of the Holocaust in Europe as an event perpetrated solely by the German state. On the other hand, the comparative size of the two images (the caricature is roughly four times the size of the photograph) gives greater salience to the image of Masaryk, This diminishes what Lindquist calls "inferential accuracy" of the text as a whole, as it could be read as suggesting that the "insult" to Masaryk (and by extension the Czech people) is comparable to the suffering experienced in concentration camps. Papajík notes the increased use of images in post-communist history textbooks to

[135] "dangerous superstitions".
[136] "Czech anti-Semitic caricature of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk(1900)".

prompt discussion (2016, p. 257), but these images often appear, as here, with limited contextual information (Langer and Windischbauer, 2010, p. 47). This lack of anchorage leaves the reader to interpret the images presented for themselves, based on the guidance of the teacher or their own prior knowledge. Given the different degrees of salience between the two images in the context of the discussion of anti-Semitism, the overall impact is to diminish the effects of anti-Semitism on Jewish people in the Czech lands, by presenting images that imply that Czechs were as much victims as perpetrators. As suggested by Michaels (2013) and Bărbulescu (2015) in their investigations into representations of the Holocaust in school textbooks, this might contribute to the tendency of such textbooks to "gloss over" the role of governments in the events of the Holocaust in Central and East European States.

6.3.3.3 Germans: German-speaking States and Cultures

The specificity of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP]'s dictum that "Germans" should be singled out, alongside Jews and Roma, for a special place in multi-cultural education at first sight seems odd, as German-speaking cultures and empires have been significant and often dominant in Europe for much of modern history. This is in sharp contrast to the historically persecuted minority populations of Roma and Jews. Nevertheless, they represent a significant Other for Czechs, either in the position of occupying regimes, co-operative neighbours, or sizeable national minority. The intertwined nature of their histories makes the representation of German-speaking cultures, populations and institutions instructive in discerning how "national" the historical narrative presented by these textbooks is.

The representation of German-speaking populations in the grade 6 and 7 textbooks is notable largely for its omission. In the grade 7 textbook, however, it is interesting to note that in the section on the reformation of the Catholic church, there is no reference made to the "nationality" of Martin Luther. This is especially odd, given the role that his vernacular translation of the bible had in the standardization of the German language – arguably one of his most significant influences. No mention is made of Calvin's origins either

(although Henry VIII is explicitly referred to as the King of England). This might not be significant, were it not for the fact that in the earlier section on Jan Hus, his "Czechness" and influence on Czech culture is repeatedly emphasized (Koldinská and Zálohová, 2009).

Discussion of the Habsburg dynasty in this volume is generally limited to its role in the Czech lands, where it is represented very much as an Other; the section begins with the title *"Katolický král v nekatolické zemi"*[137] (Koldinská and Zálohová, 2009, p. 128) - in keeping with the dominant narrative of the Habsburgs as oppressors, although the period is in no way represented as the "three hundred years of darkness" of popular Czech imagination in the textbook. When discussing the Habsburg period, no distinction is made in the textbooks between German-speaking citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the general populations and citizens of other German-speaking territories. This limited representation of Germans in the early textbooks is interesting. It does not necessarily downplay the importance or significance of German-speaking figures or institutions and may be attributed to the temporal focus of the texts. It does, however, lead to inevitable comparisons between the positive, and decidedly "national" representation of Hus to the invisibility of Luther and Calvin's origins.

In the grade 8 and 9 textbooks (for 13-15-year-olds), Germany is a far more visible presence (perhaps unsurprisingly, as the period that these volumes deal with is largely post-unification imperial Germany and the twentieth century after WWI respectively). The major political events – such as the establishment of the German state – are represented largely as such, with little attempt in the textbooks to emote or relate events to the lives of "ordinary people". Post-WWII, the transfer of the German-speaking populations from the Sudetenland (both the legal and "wild") was an act of persecution of German-speaking peoples perpetrated by the Czech state and by vigilantes within the Czech population. This is an uncomfortable chapter in Czech-German relations, where traditional roles of oppressed and oppressor (according to conventional narrative) were reversed. The necessity of confronting these events may be one of the reasons that Germans were singled out as having a special place in the education of young Czechs in the

[137] "Catholic King in a Non-Catholic Land".

EU. It is somewhat surprising, then, that although according to the index there are seven references to the *odsun* (transfer) in the ninth grade textbook, these references for the most part fleeting; the exception is a page devoted to the events (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 100).

In this textbook series, the general trend is toward representing the "human" side of history in more detail through use of analogy with modern day scenarios (although this becomes less frequent in the textbooks for the higher grades), this is not the case here. The focus instead is on the official endorsement of the transfer, with the fact that three million German citizens had to leave the country blandly stated in a short sentence. A photograph depicting their departure shows an orderly line of people filing out, with those in the foreground smiling:

Figure 6.17: An orderly process "Transfer of Germans" (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 100).

By using a photograph to depict the orderly nature of the legal transfer and a drawing to depict the darker events, the former is conferred a higher degree of documentary reality – as Barthes points out, they are "images without a code" (Barthes, 1977, p. 17) which, it is assumed, can be taken at face value in a way that drawings cannot. Although this is not necessarily true – photographers still make choices about subject, framing, and lighting – the documentary photo illustrating the transfer suggests to the reader that this is

a representation of how these events unfolded. The anchorage provided by the caption "*Odsun Němců*"[138] "directs the reader through the signifieds of the image" (Barthes, 1977, p. 156) towards the interpretation that this is an accurate and representative depiction of how the legal transfer took place. This contrasts sharply with the empathic treatment of Czech nobility expelled after the Battle of White Mountain in the grade seven textbook.

In contrast, the infamous events that took place in *Ústí nad Labem* are represented by an (admittedly graphic) illustration, rather than a photograph:

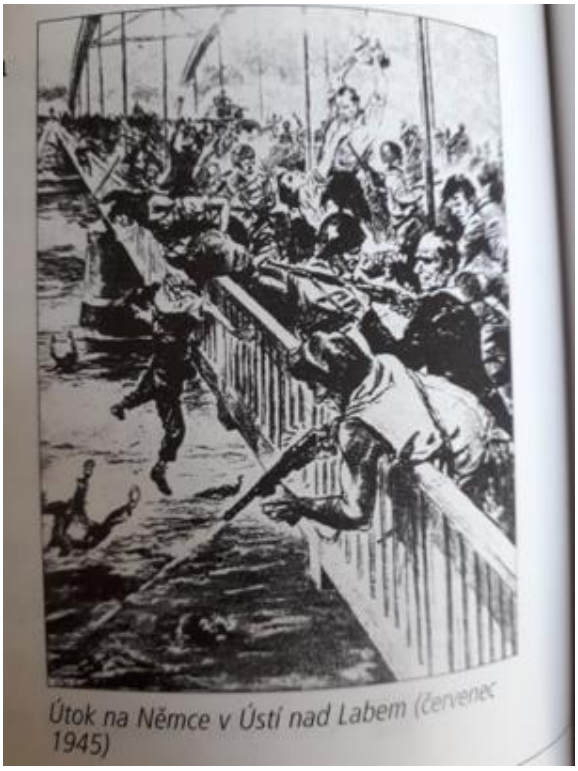


Figure 6.18: Attack on Germans in Ústí nad Labem (July 1945) (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 100).

This use of a drawing here ambiguates these events by adding another interpretive layer (i.e. the drawing). In this section, promoting sympathy for those expelled is only expressly encouraged by a short quotation in the side panel, which is positioned far from the image it is related to:

> *" ,… V Krásném Březně došlo k útokům na Němce v ulicích města. Před půl pátou došlo na mostě a v jeho okolí k napadání Němců. Podle dobových zpráv nebral dav ohled ani na ženy a děti' (krácený úryvek*

[138] "Expulsion of Germans".

z článku Co se stalo v Ústí nad Labem 31. července 1945 od Tomáše Staňka, Dějiny a současnost, 1990)"[139] *(Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 100)*.

The positioning of the above quotation on the upper left of the page, while the drawing appears on the bottom right, distances the text from the image. So while the text has the potential to relay additional information to the reader by providing information that is not available from the image alone, it relies on students knowing that Krásné Březno is in the Ústí nad Labem area to connect the two. Rather than providing the image with anchorage to direct the reader's interpretation, the spatial distance between the text and the image it relates to adds a degree of ambiguity to the text, making the relationship between the two unclear. There is no mention of the numbers killed or injured in the attacks in Krásné Březno specifically, although the text does refer to the fact that *"Mimořádné lidové soudy soudily asi 30 000 lidí a vynesly 819 rozsudků smrti. Ve většině případů se jednalo o postižení viníků, ale mnohé rozsudky byly vyřizováním osobních a politických účtů"*[140](Parkan et al., 2011, p. 100). This goes some way towards illustrating that German civilians were victims of violence, not just perpetrators, but still provides justification for acts of violence carried out by these "extraordinary people's courts" by emphasising that punishment was warranted in "most cases". Furthermore, using a secondary source, rather than a report from the period to describe the events adds yet another layer of interpretation – this is presented as an author's summary of the contemporary reports, suggesting that it is open to discussion, which contrasts with the authoritative authorial voice in the main body of the text, which focuses on justified punishment meted out to participants of the Nazi regime and collaborators. A few supplementary questions ask pupils to consider the whether the post-war events were acts of justice or revenge, and to evaluate the difference between how the transfers were intended to take place and the reality. However, the overall effect is one that downplays the role of Czech citizens in the "wild" transfer, as the human impact on Germans. It would take a very enquiring child or interested teacher to glean a fuller picture of events from the information supplied in this textbook.

[139] "In Krásné Březno there was an attack against the Germans on the streets of the city. Before 4.30, a crowd had begun to attack the Germans and the surrounding area. According to period reports, the crowd paid no regard to either women or children".

[140] "Extraordinary people's courts tried around 30, 000 people and sentenced 819 to death. In most cases perpetrators were convicted, but many convictions were to settle personal or political scores" .

6.3.3.4 Representation of Germans, Jews and Roma in the Holocaust

Discussion of the Holocaust is integrated into the chapters dedicated to WWII, with a double-page spread dedicated to the death camps. Beside the heading of these pages, a photograph of a yellow cloth star at the top of the side panels indicates the topic of the pages and is intended to be easily recognised by students. This is accompanied by other recognisable images, such as the *"Arbeit macht Frei"* sign above the gates of Terezín, and a photo of Anne Frank writing. The main text discusses groups targeted for imprisonment or execution: Jews, political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, criminals, stateless people, "antisocials" (which later came to include Roma), Roma, and homosexuals. Each of these groups is represented by a coloured triangle according the colour codes used to denote them in concentration camps, which presents students with a level of abstraction – there is little to connect these triangles with the lives of the victims, either in the form of photography or text Jews are: a smiling Anne Frank, a yellow star, a yellow triangle. Roma are a black or brown triangle – there are no photos of Roma in this section, although there is a short paragraph which explains that the Roma population *"byla z rasových důvodů určena k likvidaci"*[141] (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 65) and states that a total of half a million Roma were killed as part of the "final solution". Such vast numbers are difficult to comprehend, and the fact that there are no photographs of Roma makes it difficult for the reader to connect the number to real victims. This lack of visual representation reflects the general near-invisibility of Roma people and history throughout the series.

Persecution of Jewish people is emphasised in the main text, but the chapter begins with a quotation from Hitler – as Lindquist (2009) points out, giving prominence to Hitler's role in textbooks can detract from the social and processual nature of the events that took place, although this textbook does not have any of the large photographs of Hitler that appear in some of the textbooks that he critiques. More troubling are the questions that follow: *"Proč chtěli Němci úplně vyhladit židovské obyvatelstvo? Z čeho byli Židé Němci obviňováni?"*[142] (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 64). These questions not only portray

[141] "was destined for liquidation on racial grounds" (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 65)
[142] "Why did the Germans want to completely exterminate the Jewish population? What did Germans accuse Jews of?" (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 64).

the German people as a whole as desirous of exterminating the Jewish population, but the latter implies that it could be motivated by a desire for vengeance. This could lead readers to infer that the extermination of a people is a legitimate response to wrongs, real or imagined.

The extermination of Roma is less prominent than that of the Jewish population, but it has its own discreet section, albeit a short one. An additional section on p. 77 describes the extermination of Czech Roma during the Holocaust, before asking what Czech relations to Roma are like today. While this question seems intended to generate discussion about the nature of prejudice and its possible consequences, without having background information about the gradual erosion of minority rights that preceded the genocide, it would be difficult for students to infer these links. On the whole, the coverage of the Holocaust/Shoa/Porajmos in these textbooks is thin. The complexity of the circumstances is difficult to convey in just a few pages. However, this is in keeping with the general approach to history teaching that is promoted by the series, which favours breadth over depth.

6.3.4 Promoting a European identity

Zajda notes a tendency towards a "Europeanisation" of history textbooks "an example of western-dominated Grand Narrative of pluralist democracy, multiculturalism, and human rights, according to the canon of a particularly European dimension" (2009, p. 384). The textbooks analysed for this study support the idea that the Czech Republic, in keeping with this trend, sought to realign the nation politically towards the West (Mitter, 1992). The historical narrative that is depicted locates the nation in a Western European, and more broadly Western, context. This is supported by the symbolism of the images used on the covers as well as the content of the books. The progression of history as depicted on the covers of the textbooks makes the political orientation of the Czech Republic clear. Modern history is European, strongly associated with the French Revolution – the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity are embodied by the *Marianne,* displayed prominently on the cover of the eighth-grade textbook. Progress is equally Western – the astronaut depicted wears a NASA space suit, the Sydney opera house is the icon of modern culture.

The earliest history that is described in the textbooks starts with the beginning of agriculture and settlement, establishing this as the cornerstone of civilization as we know it. However, the association of civilization with settlement also effectively side-lines nomadic cultures into irrelevance from an early stage in education. This selection of perspective may be valid – after all, a selection of material must be made, it is not possible to include all possible perspectives, and it is difficult to source histories from oral traditions – but the automatic assumption that this is valid is what is worth noting in this case. Non-settled peoples do not easily conform to a standard narrative of settlement, building and progress.

According to Gellner (1983), the idea that the borders of the ethnic nation and the nation-state should be congruent is one of the central tenets of nationalist feelings. In a state where the contemporary borders were established well within living memory of most of the population, establishing their legitimacy is of some importance, tying the history of the people to the land that they inhabit. An interesting example of the textbook de-emphasizing the ephemeral nature of political boundaries occurs in the grade six textbook. Here, a map of Europe during the Ice Age depicting the areas covered by ice is shown with contemporary political borders:

Figure 6.20: the ice age in Europe (Velímský, et al., 2009, p. 78).

Whilst this may be a useful aid for pupils to understand better the area of Europe that was covered in ice, it also implies that these borders are in some way almost eternal and natural, rather than politically constructed.

6.3.5 Strategies for Developing Transferable Skills and Civic Values

The development of values and skills promoted by this series of textbooks must be considered in relation to the content covered, in order to establish the extent to which pupils are likely to be critical of the content presented to them

and therefore the impact it may have on their sense of identity. The textbooks explicitly link the knowledge, values and skills that should be developed through using these textbooks to the desired outputs and competencies of the RVP. Here, after describing the most pertinent connections to the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], some of the claims made by the books is discussed, and their likely impact evaluated.

The skills to be developed by pupils through working with the textbooks are outlined in detail on the final page of each of the textbooks and are identical in all four books in the series (with the exception of those that directly relate to curriculum content of each volume). These are: learning competencies; problem-solving competencies; communication competencies; social and personal competencies; civil competencies; working competencies. These skills directly correlate to those that the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] states that students should be working towards. This section will focus on the "social and personal competencies" and "civil competencies", as these are the skills most closely connected to the students' development of a view of the nation, society and their role within it. The aims are stated in terms of what the textbooks should "guide the learner towards" *("Práce s učebnicí vede žáka k")*. Under "personal and social competencies" these refer to pupils' ability to co-operate with others in class and in general, but also point pupils towards understanding of sources of conflict and their possible societal consequences, as well as enabling pupils to use their historical knowledge to *"rozpoznávat myšlenky a činy, které do společnosti zasévají nenávist a zlobu"* and to *"být schopen vést na základě historických zkušeností diskusi směřující k jejich potlačení"*[143] (Parkan, et al., 2011, p. 166). Civic competences to be developed include becoming familiar with various possibilities for organizing human societies, the impact of human activity on nature, and developing an appreciation of cultural and historical heritage. Altogether, according to their stated aims, the books seek to promote the development of values such as tolerance and respect, and minimize a chauvinistic worldview by encouraging co-operation, empathy and understanding.

[143] "Recognise ideas and actions that sow hatred and anger in society" and to "be able to lead discussions, based on historical experience, to suppress these feelings".

How likely the textbooks are to achieve these aims depends not only on the information presented, but also on the questions that are asked about the material, the analogies drawn, and the images accompanying the text (Kress, 2006). Another key factor is how the textbook is used by the teacher – whether it is the main source of information and questions in the classroom, simply a supporting resource for the teacher's own or other materials, or anywhere in-between (Korostelina, 2013). Because a textbook, by its nature, strongly classifies and frames the material presented, the teacher's role can be to reinforce or weaken the boundaries between what is in the book and what is ultimately presented to students (Bernstein, 2000). If the framing and classification remain strong, then the textbook effectively dictates the course content; if they are weakened there is more scope for pupils and teachers to pay more attention to what interests them. However, in the latter case, as Bernstein's model shows, this tends to advantage pupils from dominant social groups.

The final section of the textbook makes some specific claims about *how* they support the student in developing the desired civic competencies. These are: by assigning group tasks to encourage co-operation between students; by promoting students' appreciation of their historical and cultural heritage by presenting works of art in such a way as to promote understanding of their value; and by leading students to appreciate how man interacts with, and influences nature through not only describing situations, but also through consideration and discussion. It is interesting to note that it this is the only section of skills development that is framed so explicitly. This may be a consequence of the emphasis placed on these competencies by the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] and the authors' desire to make their adherence to these guidelines explicit, as the textbook de-emphasizes the rote learning of dates and events of symbolic importance. The main information to be memorized in each section is presented in a few sentences in a short "summary" section of key facts and dates. In this way, the book determines what must be committed to memory. However, there are no written exercises to complete and instead the questions presented may be discussed and answers written at the teacher's discretion.

The type of questions presented are also an important factor in the development of skills. The majority of those presented at the end of the

sections, and in the captions and side panels, are higher order questions that ask pupils to discuss and evaluate as well as describe the events presented in the preceding section. For example, in the section related to Komenský in the "Thirty Years War" chapter, pupils are asked to first of all justify why Komenský is referred to as the "Teacher of Nations", and then decide on what opinions and achievements they value from the lesson about Komesnký. The first of these might be taken at face value and answered from the material in the lesson in quite a literal way (i.e. that Komenský was invited to speak to the English Parliament and the Queen Christina of Sweden about his new educational methods), or pupils could interpret the moniker more metaphorically and give a more speculative answer. The likelihood of pupils undertaking to do the latter would largely be dependent on their motivation and confidence in their own ability to infer information. The second question, however, forces the pupil to express their own thoughts and opinions, although it does not ask for an explanation or justification of why the students value some feats and opinions over others. This seems a missed opportunity to promote a degree of meta-cognition and force pupils to consider the sources of their ideas and opinions. However, this is left to the teacher to explore should he or she deem it worthwhile or necessary.

Allowing pupils the scope to decide what is valuable to them in the content presented shows a significant shift from the "encyclopaedic" style of presentation of facts that were required to be learned by heart that the Czech system had been criticized for by western scholars in the 1990s (Perry, 2006). However, evaluating against their own prior learning, opinions, or prejudices could be problematic, and lead to reproduction of divisions – for example, if the teacher responds to some more positively than others. Nevertheless, these textbooks go a long way towards promoting discussion and provoking critical thinking using higher order questions.

6.3.6 Reflections on History Textbooks

It is clear from the content of the textbooks that they aim to imbue students not only with an overview of European history, but also promote the tolerance, respect for others, and democratic values that conform to the core values of the European Union (Europa, 2005). However, some of the content implies the persistence of attitudes that do not fit with this model, and whilst not

deliberately promoting negative attitudes towards Others, or perpetuating a particularly favourable version of the Czech nation, sometimes space is left for these to go unchallenged. Minorities are represented but marginalized in the textbooks – Jews and Roma are each given their own sections, but Roma history is not well integrated into the narratives of Czech or European history, cementing their Otherness. The emphasis on civilization beginning with settlement and agriculture in the early textbooks marginalizes non-settled cultures from the outset, which is particularly pertinent in the context of the Czech Republic, where Roma constitute a sizable minority population.

A “progressive” approach to the teaching of history is encouraged by the textbooks, in which the information imparted in the textbooks is presented for analysis and discussion, rather than for memorization. Pupils are encouraged to relate events of the past to their own knowledge and experience wherever possible, and in this way the books attempt to promote a sense of empathy that extends to the present. However, this weaker classification and framing allows more space for cultural bias to be reproduced in the classroom, thereby increasing the likelihood that the achievements of pupils from the dominant culture are most likely to be perceived as legitimate.

The narrative of the past that is developed throughout the series is chronologically linear. Whilst the textbooks balance Czech history with world history, certain events of symbolic significance to the Czech nation are given prominence. Western European history is prioritized, and more distant cultures are studied from a more distant temporal perspective. This suggests an underlying assumption that the Czech lands “belong” in Western Europe and the textbooks seek to reinforce that assumption. However, it is worth noting that, unlike textbooks approved for use in other countries - for example The Russian Federation (Zajda, 2009) - this series avoids explicit promotion of nationalistic, or even patriotic values.

The layout of the textbooks also helps to encourage pupils to empathize with others using side-panels which relate the main content of the pages to images portraying comparable contemporary situations, with questions prompting discussion. Whilst this might not always be successful, there is a clear attempt made to do more than simply impart information and to encourage pupils to think about alternative perspectives. On the whole, these textbooks cannot be accused of either glorifying the Czech nation, nor disparaging others. However, there are some aspects of them that could have

been more carefully considered, particularly in relation to the representation of minorities if they are to further the aims of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP].

6.4 Textbook Analysis: Citizenship Textbooks

This section analyses the content of the citizenship studies textbooks published by Fraus for grades 6-9 (ages 11-15). As in the previous section, the textbooks will be analysed in the context of the aims of the "Man and his World" curricular area, which is comprised of History and Citizenship Education. This analysis provides further material to help answer two of the central research questions of this thesis:

1. In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation-building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?

and

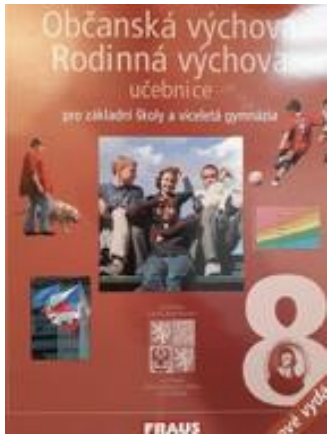
3. How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?

The major themes that emerged during the analysis were: (i) understanding of citizenship; (ii) the uses of history and representation of the nation; and (iii) representations of Others. Each of these is now discussed in order, preceding an overall reflection on the textbook series.

6.4.1 Understanding of Citizenship

One of the most striking aspects of the textbooks, and something that also emerged in the student interviews in relation to Citizenship Studies, was the sheer range of topics covered. In the interviews, participants gave the impression that the subject had been something of a "filler" in school, rather than a serious academic subject. The textbooks themselves seem to support this perception. The textbook covers, whilst they have a similar layout to the history textbooks with a large central image surrounded by smaller pictures, and all featuring the same small portrait of Komenský, include a range of images showing "ordinary" people participating in activities that represent

engagement in political processes and maintenance of healthy lifestyles. There is some representation of diversity on the cover of the grade 8 textbook – a blind woman with a guide dog, and one person of colour in a group photograph. Besides this, however, the people that are featured on the covers are white and able bodied. This suggests to the reader that this is the norm or ideal in society. The tokenistic representation of diversity almost reinforces that message by using single examples – this implies that difference can be tolerated, but only up to a certain threshold.



6.20 The cover of eighth grade Citizenship textbook.

This is important because textbooks transmit to students "images of what they can and should be like when they grow up" (Weitzman, et al., 1972, p. 1126). If students do not see themselves represented in the model of what society "should" be like as represented by the textbook, then it may be more difficult for them to negotiate their place in it. It is also worth noting that the one person of colour pictured is very light-skinned. He is seated in a group with another three white young people. His face is partly obscured by his sleeve, which together with his light skin, means that his race is not immediately apparent. Cultural preference for light-skin, known as colourism, has a long history, but "did not evolve independently of the wider system of white supremacy and racism" (Gabriel, 2007, p. 11), and this image almost seems to downplay the racial diversity of the group as far as possible. Modood points out that "the appropriate sociological starting point is … not the erasure of difference but its transformation into something for which civic respect can be won" (2013, p. 38). This photograph, if not erasing difference, certainly obscures it. For respect for difference to be attainable, the differences between people must be made visible rather than minimised.

Topics covered in the textbooks range from religion through politics and human rights to sex and drugs. This may at first seem to support the perception that this is a subject with a somewhat uncertain identity. However, if we look at it through the lens of Bernstein's model of classification and framing, we see the rigid classification and framing that in place in other curricular areas is weakened. Although it has been pointed out that weaker framing and classification of subjects and material tends to benefit pupils from the middle-class majority population who come to school having already acquired the necessary cultural and social capital for success, in this instance the weaker classification and framing may actually benefit pupils from outside the ethnic, social or economic mainstream. This is because the subject attempts to impart the "basics" of cultural and social knowledge required for successful participation in society. This could provide pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds with a means of accessing cultural capital that they have not acquired at home. The obverse of this might be, though, that if the majority of the class are from a dominant sphere of the society, then prior knowledge may be assumed by the teacher and parts of the course rushed or missed out entirely.

The various subjects are, framed as discreet "units" within the overarching "Citizenship Education" and "Family Education" (*"občanská výchova"* and *"rodinná výchova"* respectively), consisting of topics related to a particular theme, such as: "Healthy Nutrition" and "Family" (*"zdravá výživa"* and *"Rodina")* in "Family Education"; and "Man in Social Relationships" and "My Homeland" (*"Člověk v sociálních vztazích*" and *"Má vlast"*) falling under the auspices of "Citizenship Education". What is interesting about the range of subjects covered is that they are concerned with almost every aspect of a person's life – from nutrition to political participation. Through weak framing, the boundaries between the public and the personal are broken down. If Czechs, during the communist period, experienced a "retreat to the private sphere" (Holý, 1996), in which strict boundaries between the public and private sphere were established and maintained, this textbook series attempts to break these down. Although this study focused primarily on the *Občanská výchova* sections for coding and analysis, given the symbolic linking of the two topics by combining them in one textbook, it is worth considering how representations of the family relate to ideas about the nation.

As has been pointed out, the distinction between the public and private spheres became eroded during the communist period (Orság, 2015; Holý, 1996). However, the communist authorities had an equivocal approach to the idea of the family, and possible even sought to weaken ties between the individual and the family, the better to strengthen ties between the individual and the state (Hamplová, 2001). It might have been expected, then, that this distinction would be re-established during the transformation period, and that the efforts of the state to "interfere" with family life through education would be minimal, and indeed Czech teachers expressed some reservations about being required to teach the subject, which was not traditionally part of the Czech school curriculum (Střelec, 1997). But, as the state re-oriented itself westwards, the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] incorporated *Rodinná výchova* into the required subjects for schools under the subject area *"Člověk a jeho svět"*[144], which covers health and social education, as well as history and citizenship. In the Fraus series, *Rodinná výchova* mainly focuses on sex education for the upper grades, but also deals with issues such as addiction, mental health, and spiritual well-being. Despite the broad scope of the topic, representations of families and family life appear throughout.

Education traditionally assumes the middle-class, white nuclear family as the "mythical norm" (Chambers, 2001, p. 3), which has the potential to be detrimental to students who don't come from this kind of background and don't see themselves represented in the books (Wright Edelman, 2015). This traditional representation might have been expected to change as people's lifestyles less commonly follow this paradigm (Castells, 1998). However, despite changing family structures in capitalist economies (ibid.), the Fraus textbooks overwhelmingly represent families as mono-ethnic and nuclear (but sometimes multi-generational). Representations of single-parent, mixed-race, or homosexual family units is either absent or very limited; where couples are depicted, they are mono-racial, rather than inter-racial, even where attempts are made to illustrate diversity (for example as seen in Figure 6.25), suggesting that difference is more acceptable when it is easily classified.

The connection between how families are depicted links to ideas about the type of cultural and social behaviours that are considered normal or desirable in members of the nation. Primordial thinking about nationality considers this

[144] "Man and His World".

link to be self-evident, seeing the nation as a political expression “rooted in primordial human sentiments of kin–culture affinity” (Gat and Yakobson, 2013, p. 380), but even more modern conceptions of the nation depend on a shared “ideal” of the family to support social structures, as families are a "key site of social regulation and for conferring sexual, ethnic, and national identities" (Chambers, 2001, p. 176). As illustrated in chapter 6.3.3.1 with the depiction of the “good”, assimilated Roma family, their cohesiveness as a family unit was used to demonstrate their “sameness” and belonging to the nation – the implication being that they would belong less if they did not conform to this ideal.

An interesting concurrence emerges in relation to the history textbooks from the same series when the ordering of topics covered is considered. The initial topics for study in the sixth grade are: “Man in the Rhythm of Time”(*Člověk v rytmu času)* “Home is where …” (“*Domov je tam, kde”*), Family life (“*Rodinný život”*), and “Homeland” (*“Má vlast”*), followed by “From history” (“*Z historie”*). If the boundaries between family and private life and the state are maintained by the grouping of subjects, it is here that the idea of home, and to some extent family, is implicitly (and even explicitly in “*Má vlast*”) connected to the Czech nation – its landscape, culture and traditions. This is examined in more detail in section 6.4.2 where the uses of history in the textbooks is discussed. If the history and citizenship textbooks from the series are used concurrently, this is the time when pupils are studying the most temporally and geographically distant topics in history. The citizenship curriculum makes way for a more nationally focused view of history that is omitted from the study of history in the sixth grade.

The ordering of topics in the textbooks may also be an indication of the prioritisation of material. Although it does not necessary mean that teachers are obliged to follow the order in which topics are presented in the textbook, the placing of the citizenship course at the beginning of the books and the personal and health related topics towards the end does suggest a prioritisation of the latter. In spite of teachers’ best intentions and meticulous planning, material set to be covered at the end of courses (especially in the summer term when other events, such as trips and sports days eat into class time) tends to be covered in less depth than material covered earlier in the year. The implication here is that the official aspects of citizenship are more

highly prioritised than the personal aspects of the course. This may eventually disadvantage those students who do not have access to such information outside of school.

Finally, the use of informal style of the authorial voice of the citizenship books must be considered. In the history textbooks, the formal style of address (using second person plural form "*vy"* for verbs) is used, whereas the citizenship textbooks use the informal second person singular "*ty".* Thus, a symbolic distinction is drawn between the formal, academic, and at least ostensibly objective discipline of history and the somewhat cosier citizenship studies, in which references abound to "our ancestors", "our land" and "our past". This distinction is notable, as by addressing the students in this way, a level of familiarity is assumed; shared values, shared history etc. However, this is potentially excluding to those from outside cultures.

On the whole, the understanding of the concept of citizenship conveyed by the textbooks is that is takes in almost every aspect of life – health, relationships, family, language, culture, political participation, and belonging. It is inclusive, but only up to a point, with difference either obscured, or where visible it is seen as outwith the white, Czech-speaking, able-bodied norm.

6.4.2 Uses of History and Representations of the Nation

The global coherence of a textbook or series of textbooks refers to the connections (explicit or implied) between different chapters and topics (Harniss, et al., 2001), and thus the overall meaning that is transmitted. In this series, the authors create a narrative in which time, land, culture, tradition, history, and family are inextricably linked. This is achieved through the ordering of topics; representations of tradition and family life; and by making explicit connections with the history curriculum, thereby encouraging association of the present nation with the ancient past. This effect is compounded using informal, inclusive language that directly addresses the pupil in the informal style. The way in which history is used to build up a picture of the Czech state and the Czech citizen in the citizenship textbooks is revealing, as the transmission of historical knowledge may be assumed to be the preserve of history lessons. Nevertheless, history features prominently in

the early stages of the citizenship curriculum. In this section, the type of historical knowledge promoted, and the ways in which it is transmitted is discussed with a view to determining the extent to which this is informed by traditional views of the Czech nation.

The order in which topics are presented for study in the grade 6 textbook is telling. It begins by introducing the concept of time in relation to the development of civilisation, before moving on to ideas about what constitutes a "home". Pupils are invited to explore and discuss this notion in a variety of ways, but the summary text instructs them that *"Celá planeta Země je naším domovem, ale místem nejbližším a nejznámějším je pro nás většinou obec, v níž žijeme"*[145] (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 17). This is followed by a section on *"Rodinný život"*[146], followed by *"Má vlast"*[147], and *"Z historie"*[148], before moving on to more practical matters such as human rights, school life and first-aid. It has already been pointed out that those topics foregrounded tend to be the highest priority subjects, covered in most depth. What is interesting here is the interweaving of time, home, nation, and history at the beginning of the book. By presenting these topics in this order, a symbolic link between them is implied. In this way, pupils are encouraged to see the nation as their home, its members as their family.

Building up a base of knowledge about Czech history appears to be a priority in this textbook series. This is demonstrated most clearly by the fact that the grade 6 textbook, which, as mentioned previously seems designed to dovetail with the history textbook, providing more national historical information than is provided in the history textbook. The textbooks aimed at grades 7, 8 and 9 (where the history studied has more of a national focus) contain far less reference to historical events and figures and are more concerned with contemporary society. Further evidence of this can be found in the index of names; the grade 6 textbook contains 127 names of significant persons, grade 9 only 25. It is interesting too, to note the proportions of these from different backgrounds – in the grade 9 textbook, 25% of figures listed are Czech; in the grade 6 book, the proportion is somewhere between 60-65%,

[145] "The whole of planet Earth is our home, but the place closest and most familiar for us is that community where we live".
[146] "Family life".
[147] "My country".
[148] "From History".

depending on whether fictional and mythical characters are included. This suggests that having at least a passing familiarity with certain types of cultural and historical knowledge is somehow connected to one's capacity to be a "good" citizen, if that is what the textbook aims to promote. This is one way in which a conventional narrative of Czech history is transmitted and legitimised through the content of the citizenship textbooks.

Kress points out the increased use of image in schoolbooks over time, especially in the upper stages, where written explanations were traditionally favoured over graphic illustrations (2006, pp. 16-17). Throughout the citizenship textbooks there is an emphasis on the symbolic. The books are heavily dominated by images; text is scant in comparison to the history books. On the one hand, this might make the content more accessible, as a lower level of knowledge of the language is needed to interpret the text. However, this could also contribute to the subject matter being taken less seriously by students, as texts that rely more on visual communication may be viewed as "childish". Although this is "not based on an opposition to the visual as such, but on an opposition in situations where it forms an alternative to writing and can therefore be seen as a potential threat to the present dominance of verbal literacy among elite groups" (Kress, 2006, p. 17). If the elite group in this case is native speakers of the Czech language, the fact that the section of the curriculum that is explicitly concerned with citizenship and diversity relies heavily on visual communication could lead to a perceived lack of legitimacy of the subject matter, as it is presented in a less "academic" manner than other subjects.

The ways in which historical events and figures are presented illustrates their symbolic significance without contextual information that may challenge their importance. For example, in grade 6 textbook, a timeline is presented alongside a series of images:

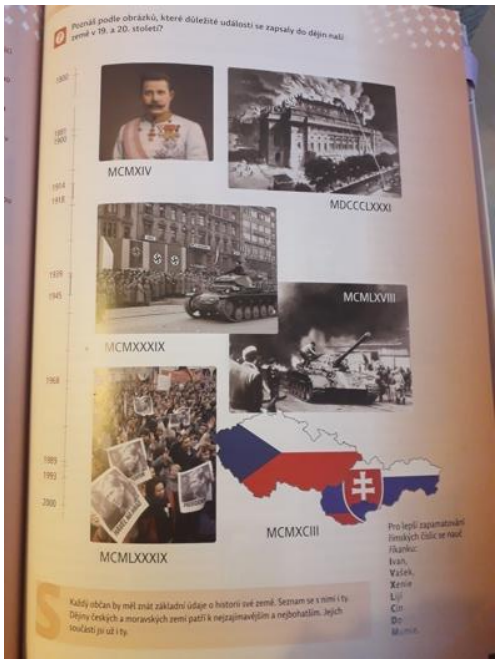


Figure 6.21: Timeline of historical events (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 73).

These images depict: the archduke Franz Ferdinand, the fire that destroyed the first National Theatre in Prague, the Nazi occupation, the Warsaw Pact invasion, crowds in favour of Václav Havel for president, and the separation of Czechoslovakia. The accompanying text states that *"Každý občan by měl znát základní údaje historie své země. Seznam se s nimi i ty. Dějiny českých a moravských zemí patří k nejzajímavějším a nejbohatším. Jejich součástí jsi už i ty"*[149] (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 73). This view is not offered for consideration but stated as fact. There is no suggestion that students should challenge this view, or opportunity to question why the events depicted are of such significance.

In the following pages, a range of "important Czechs" (e.g. writers, inventors, the anti-Nazi fighters in *Obrana národa*[150]) are presented, often with a photograph, and a very short list of their achievements. Due to the nature of textbooks as a legitimising device, highlighting the importance of these people and events without additional context enables these events and figures to attain symbolic value merely through their inclusion, thus perpetuating and consolidating the dominant narrative of Czech history. The overall impact is to imbue readers with a sense of being *part* of a historical narrative that has

[149] "Every citizen should know the basic historical events of their own country. Get to know them. The history of Bohemia and Moravia is some of the richest and most interesting. You are already a part of it".
[150] Defence of the Nation.

led to the nation in its present form and promoting a sense of familiarity with the "great" Czech national figures from the past. However, this is contingent on students' ability sufficiently identify with the past – for those with different ethnic or cultural roots, this may be an exercise in alienation, rather than integration. If pupils do not come to school equipped with a foundation of the "right" cultural knowledge (which may particularly be the case with children from migrant families, or Roma backgrounds), then they may not be able to fully engage with some of the historical material presented in these textbooks. Indeed, some of the tasks in the textbook seem designed to catch out pupils who lack this knowledge, for example a multiple-choice quiz about historical figures (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 72).

This is one of the mechanisms through which Bourdieu (2010) envisages the school curriculum favouring those who are already "privileged" in society, thus cementing their position and embedding inequality. However, it could also be argued that creating a space within the official curriculum for the transmission of such knowledge (even if it is by establishing what pupils do *not* know) at least provides an opportunity for the acquisition of the legitimate knowledge required for being a successful citizen, and thus by extension a member of the national in-group. It appears from this that there exist certain assumptions about what children *should* know by a certain age and stage of education to allow popular ideas about the story of the nation to become part of the official narrative disseminated to schoolchildren through their schoolbooks.

In places, links between the history and citizenship courses are made explicit through questions posed in the side-panels of the pages. For example, in a section titled *"V hlubinách dávných časů"*[151] pupils are presented with images of archaeological sites of ancient settlements and a short homage to the skills of ancient craftsmen, the side panels present pupils with two tasks:

> *"Zjisti, která pravěká naleziště jsou ve vašem okolí nebo ve vašem kraji".*[152]
>
> And

[151] "In the depths of ancient times".
[152] "Find out what prehistorical landscapes are to be found in your neighbourhood or region".

“Připomeň si z hodin dějepisu, které archeologické kultury existovaly v naší zemi”[153] (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 69).

These tasks encourage pupils to connect their surroundings to the pre-historic cultures that lived in the area. This suggests that providing students with imaginative links to the distant past of the land which is now the Czech Republic is in some way important to developing a sense of citizenship and belonging to the nation. This impression is reinforced by the deixis used; pupils are asked to remember from history lessons what cultures existed in “our” *(“náš”)* land and consider “our distant ancestors” *(“naše dávné předky”).* Such language, albeit subtly, stakes a proprietorial claim over the history of the region, and hints at a continuous lineage of inhabitants from pre-history until the present day, a view that is rather more congruous with a primordialist “blood and soil” nationalism that an inclusive, civic view of citizenship.

The idea of a continuous link with the more recent past is also encouraged through the use of old photographs. These are frequently juxtaposed with recent images of comparable scenes, for example:

Figure 6.22: Past and present (Janošková, et al., 2012, p. 8).

Such juxtapositions are traditionally used in education to emphasise the *Otherness* of the past (Samuel, 2012, p. 322). However, the example here seems to highlight similarity, rather than difference. Thus, pupils are encouraged not only to *empathise* with, but to *identify* with people from other eras. The past is presented less like a foreign country and more like a distant relative.

[153] “Remember from your history lessons, which archaeological cultures existed in our country”.

Although history plays a relatively small role in the citizenship textbook series, its positioning, where it dominates in sixth grade, and gradually recedes, suggests that a base of historical knowledge of symbolically significant events and figures is in some way fundamental to citizenship. It is easy to see how the "the image of their communion" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) between members of the nation might become part of pupils' imagination of their place in society if they identify with the narrative they are presented with. As Modood points out "Multicultural citizenship requires, therefore, if it is to be equally attractive … a comparable counterbalancing emotional pull" (2013, p. 138). However, if students come from a culture outside of this narrative, then the view of citizenship in relation to the nation here might serve an alienating function instead of providing an "emotional pull" that would make them feel a sense of belonging to the nation.

6.4.3 Representations of Others in Citizenship Textbooks

Representations of non-Czech cultures are less clearly framed in the citizenship textbooks than in the history textbooks. In the history books, national minorities such as Jews and Roma have discreet sections devoted to them, which is not the case in the citizenship books. This section examines how notions of belonging are implied in these textbooks through representations of non-Czechs in relation to Czechs, focusing on visual representations of other cultures, as well as how language and religion are used as signifiers of identity. It demonstrates that although racial, linguistic, and religious diversity is represented to a degree, and the importance of respect emphasised, the vision of Czech society represented in the textbooks is overwhelmingly white and Christian. This has the potential to legitimise or perpetuate divisions and inequalities that already exist between the dominant Czech culture and minorities in the country. It has been pointed out that textbooks play a crucial role in depicting the type of society considered desirable (Weitzman, et al., 1972). However, the definition of desirability and what it looks like is most often defined by the dominant culture (Wang, 2006). Therefore, in a country where the inclusion of a black man on a supermarket's advertising flyer caused a minor media furore (Baudyšová, 2017), it seems imperative that people of colour are represented as integral, equal members

of society, rather than as illustrations of diversity, exoticness, or global problems.

A civic concept of citizenship, as opposed to an ethno-centric one, is introduced at the very beginning of the sixth-grade textbook. However, the diversity depicted in this initial page is does not continue throughout the textbook series, and as such appears as merely paying lip-service to the idea of inclusion. In an exercise that is intended to show that nationality need not be based on race, skin colour or ethnic origin, pupils are presented with a set of photographs depicting children of different ethnic backgrounds and invited to speculate on where they might come from, and whether it is possible that they are all citizens of the same state:

Figure 6.23: Representing diversity? (Janošková, et al., 2012. P. 5).

This has the potential to be a very useful exercise in getting pupils to address their own assumptions; if the pupils do not reach the conclusion that all of those children depicted could be Czech just like them, the teacher could guide them towards this idea, exploring why they may have assumed otherwise. However, the usefulness of this exercise is rather undermined by the lack of diversity depicted elsewhere. As has been mentioned previously, the illustrations of "everyday life" on the covers of each of the textbooks are strikingly ethnically homogenous, particularly given that one of the stated aims of the course is to develop respect for cultural differences and tolerance towards minorities.

This trend continues throughout the textbooks' content. Although each one contains multiple depictions of non-European and non-white cultures, they are almost never depicted engaged in "ordinary" activities in the Czech

Republic. Instead, they are depicted in the margins, showing exotic alternatives or equivalents to cultural rites of passage, for example here:

Figure 6.24: Marginalising diversity (Janošková, et al., 2011, p. 80).

In this image, Others are quite literally marginalised – represented in the side panels of the textbook, as illustrations of the diversity that exists in the wider world. The large picture of the Czech wedding on the right, is given salience by its prominence and the amount of white that takes up the frame. It seems to represent an ideal to be attained, when compared to the smaller, darker pictures on the left.

Elsewhere, depictions of non-white people signify global problems such as poverty and famine:

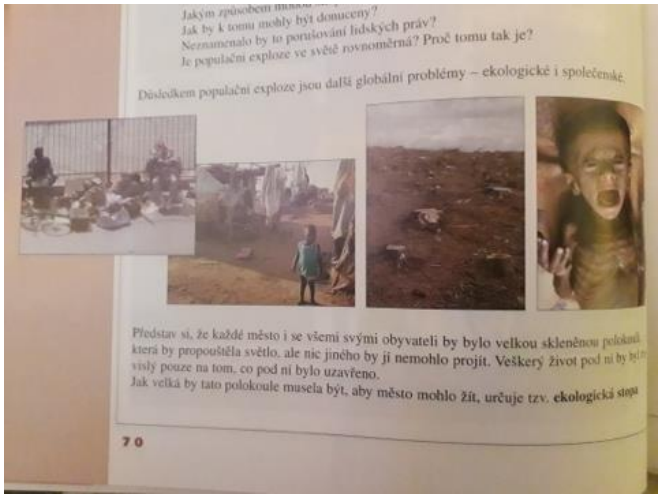


Figure 6.25: Images of poverty and famine (Janošková, 2006, p. 70).

These images appear on a page titled *"Příliš mnoho lidí, příliš problémů"*[154] (Janošková, 2006, p. 70). While global over-population is discussed in the text, without reference to any particular areas, the combined salience of the title and images combine to lead the reader to infer that it is over-population of Others that is causing the problem, rather than over-consumption of resources by a minority of the global population. Given that these are just two examples of scattered representations of non-white and non-Czech cultures in the textbooks, it is clear that representation of Others is done in a tokenistic way, rather than seeking to promote deep understanding. Apple argues that even where education systems have moved beyond such "mere mentioning of the culture and histories of 'the other'", this still allows discourses to emerge that allow the erasure, rather than the celebration of difference (1999, p. 12). These textbooks, however, have not moved away from "mere mentioning", and as such act as a mechanism by which the dominance of the majority culture is maintained. Here, the dominant representation of non-white people in the textbook series is an Other, against which the dominant culture can compare itself, often favourably, as in the photos above. These depictions have the potential to affect pupils' expectations of society – if that which they see represented as "normal" is predominantly white, this may be what they come to expect of society. This effect is likely to be compounded if pupils are do not have the opportunity to interact with people of other races and cultures while at school, which may be the case simply because there are none, but may also result from the persistence of the segregation of Roma and migrant pupils into special schools (Roma Education Fund, 2012). This may also lead to those who are not represented in the textbooks to question their own position in Czech society. The fact that this series of citizenship studies textbooks limits representations of diversity to "mentioning" indicates that a hegemonic view of the nation remains pervasive – a view that is, if these textbooks are typical, being legitimised and reproduced in schools.

As Holý (1996) has pointed out, language has been a key signifier of Czech identity since the National Revival. Therefore, representation of linguistic diversity in the textbook series may indicate the extent to which it is recognised as a feature of modern Czech society, rather than a marker of

[154] "Too many people, too many problems?"

difference. Much like representation of ethnic and racial difference, linguistic difference is only briefly touched upon. In the sixth grade textbook (Janošková, et al., 2012, pp. 62-63), pictures of children introducing themselves in different languages (English, Roma, German, Slovak, Russian, and Vietnamese) are introduced by the text: “Not all citizens of our state have Czech nationality. Different national minorities also live here, which speak their own languages.” Again, the Otherness of speaking different languages is emphasised, without further elaboration. There is no discussion of what this might mean for Czech society. It is simply stated and illustrated and then the focus is immediately shifted back to variety within the dominant Czech culture with the phrase: “But people of Czech nationality also speak other languages”. This does not, however, introduce the notion that people of different ethnic or national origins can also be, or consider themselves to be, Czech. Instead, it introduces a section on the varieties of Czech, which dominates three-quarters of the space devoted to discussing linguistic diversity. In addition to the small space devoted to the representation of other significant languages spoken in the Czech Republic, the deixis of the two quotations implies a correlation between language and nationality: those with other languages are described as “citizens” of “our state” – suggesting that the state belongs to Czech speakers and not to non-Czech speaking citizens. Whilst it seems reasonable that citizenship requires at least competence in the titular language to enable functioning in society, the possibility of bi- or multi- lingual Czech citizens, who speak Czech as well as another language is ignored. The underlying message here is that it is not possible to attain the status of being Czech, thus part of the in-group to which the state belongs, by acquiring the language; this status is something you have or do not. Such a binary conception of belonging to the nation comes very close to the type of ethnic nationalism that the textbooks elsewhere purport to reject.

6.4.5 Reflections on Citizenship Textbooks

As Morgan points out, “Most hate messages, distortions and prejudices are not inserted into textbooks consciously or deliberately. They simply reflect the underlying assumptions of a given historical period” (2012, p.95). The underlying assumptions on which this series of textbooks is based appear to

include the notion that the Czech Republic is an ethnic nation as much as a political one, in which people of different ethnicities or speakers of other languages do not fully belong. Whilst there is no denigration of significant Others, the marginalisation of other cultures throughout, and the language of ownership used when discussing the nation, promotes the idea of the Czech Republic as a homogenous entity that belongs to the dominant culture and to which Others are admitted as "guests".

This view is promoted in a number of ways. First of all, similar strategies such as direct address and questions asking pupils to consider the feelings of others are employed mainly to encourage identification with the past of the nation, rather than any Others in contemporary society. Considering the still widespread, and largely socially accepted, discrimination against Roma in Czech society, this is a striking omission. The homogeneous view of the nation is supported by the narrative of the past constructed by the textbooks, which implies a direct lineage between pre-historic cultures and the contemporary nation. This is further sustained by the layout and design of the textbooks, which gives prominence to depictions of the dominant culture, whilst including minimal, marginal representations of other cultures. Although this process is by no means unique to the Czech Republic (Zajda, 2009; Wang, 2006), this is a practice, that if allowed to go unchallenged 'present such a narrow view of reality that they must violate the child's own knowledge of a rich and complex world' (Weitzman, et al., 1972, p. 1148), which does a disservice not only to pupils of ethnic minority backgrounds, but also to those of the dominant culture.

6.5 Summary

This chapter began by discussing the role of textbooks in education and how their multi-modal nature affects how they are read and understood. The following section discussed a series of history textbooks produced to be used in the upper stages of *základní škola*. It first of all considered the approach to history education adopted by the textbooks' authors and discussed how elements of the paratext helped indicate to potential readers that the books used linear-chronological approach. Then the textbooks' representation of national minorities in the Czech Republic – Roma, Jews, and Germans - was analysed, finding that the history of Roma is discussed only briefly, and in

almost total isolation. The history of Jewish people is well integrated into the national historical narrative, but in places the images used might reinforce negative stereotypes. The interlinked nature of German-speaking cultures and Czech culture was well-integrated into the overall narrative of the textbooks, but the description of events following WWII rather downplays the Czech role in meting out vigilante justice. Next, the textbooks were discussed in relation to the skills outlined in the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], noting how they seem to promote a move away from rote-memorisation and towards critical thinking, but the success of this would depend on individual teachers' approaches.

The next section, 6.4, discussed citizenship textbooks produced by the same publisher for the same age groups. It began by exploring how citizenship appears to be understood by the textbooks' authors and discusses the validity of combining citizenship and family education. It went on to consider how historical information is used in the citizenship books, finding the narrative of the Czech nation that is promoted to readers is one that is conventional, somewhat nationalistic, and exclusive. In spite of this, the textbooks make an attempt to illustrate diversity, as was discussed in section 6.4.3. However, this attempt is undermined by the combinations of text and image that reinforce a rather ethno-centric view of the Czech nation, and casts Others as problematic.

Chapter 7 Interview Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the empirical data gathered during interviews with people who had completed compulsory education in the Czech Republic, and teachers who had worked in the system, after 1989. Chapter 7.2 deals with the student interviews. 7.2.2 to 7.2.3 explore participants thoughts about Czech identity, looking at how they differentiate between national and ethnic identity, what they consider to be “Czech characteristics”, and how they see the role of history in shaping Czech national identity. Chapter 7.2.4 to 7.2.8 focus on participants’ experiences of education. 7.2.4 discusses experiences of history lessons, while 7.2.5 discusses citizenship lessons in school. Experiences of language learning are explored in chapter 7.2.6. How the participants learned about non-Czech cultures in school is explored in chapter 7.2.7, and chapter 7.2.8 considers participants’ views on internal and external Others, with particular reference to neighbouring countries and Roma.

Although different interview schedules were used for both the student and teacher groups, the same questions regarding identity and Czech society were asked of both groups. Therefore, chapter 7.3.1 to 7.3.4 discuss how this group of participants saw the relationship between national and ethnic identity, the defining traits of Czechs, and the importance of history to Czech identity. Relations with and attitudes towards Others are discussed in Chapter 7.3.4, whilst chapter 7.3.5 deals with changes in the education system. Chapter 7 ends with a summary of the central themes that emerged during both sets of interviews.

7.2 Student Interviews

The purpose of the student interviews was primarily to answer research question 2:

> **How have peoples’ experiences of the Czech education system impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens?**

However, they also provided an opportunity to gather information regarding participants' views on research questions 3:

> **How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?**

and 4:

> **What are the potential implications for Czech identities of minority groups, particularly Roma, continuing to face segregation in schools and other structural barriers to education?**

Because all of the student participants had attended *základní škola* prior to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU in 2004, the supplementary information related to question 3 was obtained from interviews with the teacher group, all of whom had taught in the post-accession period. For the reasons explained in Chapter 4, the design of the interview schedules did not include direct questions relating to the segregation of Roma pupils. However, the issue did arise in the course of some of the interviews with both the student and teacher groups, which provided some personal perspectives and richer qualitative data than was obtainable from the documentary sources alone.

The following discussion of interview results with student group relates primarily to research question 2:

> **How have peoples' experiences of the Czech education system impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens?**

Participants were asked questions relating to their identity, their thoughts about the Czech Republic, and their experiences of *základní škola.* As outlined in the methodology chapter, people were grouped according to the extent to which being Czech formed an important part of their identities into two groups: those who felt that being Czech was an important or rather important element of their identity, and those who felt that it was not really an important element of their identity or was an arbitrary label.

7.2.1 Difference between National and Ethnic Identity

Participants were asked about both their national and ethnic identification. The vast majority of participants from both groups described their national identity as Czech. The majority interpreted this question as related to what was written on their passport, citizenship, or official identification rather than a matter of personal identity, although some responses included "European" alongside Czech as an element of national identity. Only one participant identified as being of European/Moravian nationality without any reference to being "Czech".

Asking about ethnic identity elicited a much wider range of response and was generally understood to relate more to feelings of belonging to or affinity towards a particular group than about an "official" identity. Whilst the majority of respondents also identified as ethnically Czech, some felt the need to qualify this, for example: *"I feel Czech … but not ridiculously so like it is for some Moravians"* (Lucie) or *"Čech, ale nijak radikálně*"[155] (Anna). Responses other than "Czech" fell into two categories: those that identified with a smaller group within the Czech Republic (e.g. Moravian or Silesian) and those that identified with a wider ethnic group (e.g. white, European, or Slavic). Participants were then asked, "*Jak důležité je, osobně pro Vás, být Čech/Češka?"*[156] This question was used to gauge how strongly people identified with the Czech element of their identity and subsequently divide them into the groups described above. This classification was made in order to be able to generate meaningful comparisons between the attitudes of those who felt that their nationality was central or important to their identity and those who did not. The categorisation of responses included an element of value judgement on the part of the researcher, given that not all responses easily fitted into one category or the other, for example:

> *"Tak, když jsem tady, tak to pro mě není důležitý vůbec a když jsem v zahraničí, tak mám trošku pocit, že to je trochu exotické … protože je malá země a ne každé ví, jaká ta země je a kde je a co tu děje, a tak, takže je trochu exotické ale … ale … myslím, že to není tak moc důležité"*[157] (Vera).

What is interesting here is that whilst she finally stated that it is not very important, it is also apparent that there are circumstances in which it becomes slightly more so; whilst abroad, when not a member of the dominant culture it becomes a positive attribute denoting "exoticness". This demonstrates not only that the level of identification with a given characteristic can be fluid (Brubaker, 2011; Parekh, 2000), but also shows an awareness of being the subject of a process of "Othering" whist abroad, as well as acknowledging that this can be a positive experience. It also raises interesting questions about

[155] "Czech, but not radically so"[155].
[156] How important is it, for you personally to be Czech?"
[157] „"So when I'm here, it's not important to me at all, and when I'm abroad I have a little feeling that it's a bit exotic ... because it's a small country, and not everyone knows what the country is and where it is and what's going on and so it's a bit exotic but ... but ... I think it's not so important".

what impact having open borders and free communication might have on identities. Dietler (2006) makes the point that an increasingly globalised world can motivate some to "romantic reactions against globalization", including stronger identification with a distant past or mythology. Overall, eight of the twelve student respondents stated that being Czech was an important or rather important part of their personal identity.

7.2.2 Czech Characteristics

Having established a level of affiliation with a conception of "Czechness" among the participants, I attempted to establish how they perceived the idea of "Czechness". How Czechs see themselves has been explored in depth by Holý (1996), who argues that there is a substantial divide between how Czechs see themselves as a nation and how they see the characteristics of the individuals within that nation – the conflict of "*Malý český člověk* a *velký český národ"*[158] which is characterised thus:

> *"Češi mají sami na sebe značně paradoxní názor. Zeptáte-li se jich, co si myslí o jiných Češích, budou je charakterizovat výrazy jako závistivost, konformnost, úzkoprsost a nesnášenlivost (Holý, 1996, p. 76). Požádejte je však, aby charakterizovali český národ, a uslyšíte slova jako: vysoce kulturní, hluboce demokratický, čistý"* [159] (Stroehlein, 1997).

The contrast between the conception of individual Czechs as envious, narrow-minded, intolerant conformist and the nation as highly cultured, democratic, and *"čistý"* seems irreconcilable without significant cognitive dissonance. The word *"čistý"* used here may be rendered in English simply as "clean" or "neat", but could also be translated variously as: pure, absolute, untainted, unpolluted or unadulterated. The connotations of these words (and therefore this characteristic) in a racial or national context becomes troubling, as it carries connotations of ethnic purity. It could also be applied in a moral context to mean "innocent", which also has implications for interpreting the past. In Holý's study, it is this conflict that becomes the defining feature of Czechness. Whilst

[158] "The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation".
[159] "Czechs have quite a paradoxical view of themselves. If asked what they think of other Czechs, they will characterise them by expressions such as envy, conformity, bigotry and intolerance. However, if asked to characterise the Czech nation, they will use words like highly cultured, deeply democratic, clean".

Holý's findings provided a useful starting point in informing the interpretation of the respondents' answers, his study was a meta-analysis incorporating data from a range of sources to generate an overview of Czech identity. As this study does not aim to provide a definition of what it means to be Czech, it is more useful to look at the perspectives raised by individual respondents, presenting them as quotations so that they me be read first at face value and then subjecting them to interpretation and comparison, before locating them within the wider discourse. This does not mean the material is presented entirely objectively – I have still made decisions about what material to select and the order in which it is to be presented – the validity of my interpretations is able to be scrutinised by the reader in a way that would not be possible if the quotations were not given.

Among the responses there was an element of agreement that "Czechness" as expressed through attitudes and behaviours, rather than language or ethnicity, constitutes the most meaningful expressions of Czech identity. These were often, although not uniformly – positive, and often ambiguous, for example: *"Připadá mi, že Češi jsou takoví Hobiti - mít se dobře, být pospolu, mít klid, pohodlí, přátele, dobré jídlo a pití..."*[160] (Darja). The comparison of Czechs to Hobbits is an interesting metaphor. In Tolkien's novels they are homely and friendly, but of all of the inhabitants of middle earth they are the most recognisably and fallibly human when they and their quiet way of life are threatened by war (Kocher, 1972, p. 118). They are also not the sexiest inhabitants of Middle-Earth but are able to find contentment with themselves and their lives regardless. Their attachment to the Shire, which represents the English Midlands (Birch and Hooper, 2012, p. 333), also connects this identity to a very pastoral sense of place. Another, perhaps more predictable literary comparison also emerged. *"Švejkovství"* was also identified by a couple of participants as a defining attribute of Czechs. Referring to the eponymous hero of the stories by Jaroslav Hašek, Švejk embodies the characteristics of 'the little Czech' – comfort seeking, non-confrontational (even cowardly), but possessed of enough humour and native wit to prosper (after a fashion) in whatever circumstances he finds himself. *"Švejkovství"* refers to the possession of such characteristics. The persistence of this image

[160] "It seems to me that Czechs are a bit like Hobbits – to be well, be together, to have peace, comfort, good friends, good food and drink ...".

of Czechs, or at least *an* archetypal Czech is all of the more appealing because Švejk's adventures were never completed; we do not and cannot know if it was ever intended that his chronic fecklessness, combined with what might be termed "just enough brains to be dangerous", would lead him to triumph or disaster. Although reading too much meaning into these literary comparisons is unhelpful, their significance cannot be ignored, given firstly the similarity between the characteristics that they attribute, and secondly the frequency with which elements associated with each occurred within the responses. These included a negative perception of a predilection bordering on preoccupation with beer drinking: *"Má Česká republika nějaký společný národní cíl?" - "Bohužel asi tak maximálně vypít co nejvíc piva."*[161] (Vera), but more positively a good sense of humour and a tendency to not take oneself too seriously: *"Myslím, že máme skvělý smysl pro humor..."*[162] (Anna) *"I'm definitely [proud to be Czech] because we don't take anything seriously"* (Julie). So, although only a couple of respondents made direct comparisons, components of what constitutes *"Švejkovství"* were widely accepted components of Czech identity among the respondents.

Another characteristic, that is a key component of *Švejkovství*, that was cited repeatedly as being both a widespread trait and a source of shame by the respondents was passivity, particularly in the public sphere. Three of the student respondents mentioned this directly: *""I think the passive attitude of the Czech people is also a massive problem"* (Petr), "*[stydím se] za naše politiky, za korupční prostředí, za pasivitu občanů"*[163](Barbora), "*Stydím si za občanskou pasivitu ..."*[164](Anna). Another three referred implicitly to it: "*Občanská aktivita je určitě čím dál větší, ale velká část lidí stále preferuje vlastní život a pohodlí a nechce věnovat energii ničemu veřejnému"*[165] (Daniela). The perceived pursuit of self-interest at the cost of public engagement was echoed by another participant's view on public reaction to a strike:

> *"There was a massive protest about the railway workers two or three years ago ... The government wanted to postpone the retirement age till some*

[161] "Does the Czech Republic have a common national goal?" – "Unfortunately, it's probably to drink the most beer possible".
[162] "I think we have a great sense of humour".
[163] "[I'm ashamed of] our politicians, the corrupt environment, and the passivity of citizens".
[164] "I'm ashamed of civic passiveness".
[165] "Civic activity is certainly growing, but a large number of people still prefer to live their own lives, and don't want to expend energy on something public".

ridiculous age - almost to 70 for men, so they cannot for example be a driver. So they [the railway workers] decided to go on strike on behalf of all of us, it was in all of our interests, but people were like 'Oooh, I have to take a taxi because there is no train today!' It was so ridiculous" (Natalie)

The passive nature of Czech people in public life is a frequent criticism and is, according to some writers, apparently backed up by history. Connelly (2000, p. 6) writes of the acceptance of the Czech professoriate of the closure of universities under Nazi occupation, in contrast with Poland where a network of underground education flourished. Holý (1996) offers some explanation as to how political circumstances, in particular the experience of communism, fostered the emergence of this trait, attributing it to a retreat into the private sphere during that time - although accusations of passivity have been levelled against Czechs since at least since the First World War (Teich, 1998, p. 213). Whether or not these accusations are justified is beyond the scope of this study, but the fact that this is perceived by these young Czechs as a common Czech characteristic is important as it raises an important question about national identity – namely if and how does a disengaged, passive public retain the sense of "deep horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 2006, p. 7) necessary for nation formation? The above remarks echo Holý's comment that Czechs will cheerfully deride individual members of the nation, whilst retaining an overall positive view of the nation itself.

Aside from the personality traits and cultural behaviours as described above, the main defining (or at least uniting) features of Czechness cited by participants were language and shared history. The importance of shared history to Czech identity will be discussed in depth hereafter, as this is less of a characteristic (in the sense of an attribute or behaviour), and more of a culturally imparted acquisition. Language, on the other hand, lies somewhere between the learned and the inherent in the minds of most people – almost everyone has one to call their own and the freedom to use it in daily communication is one of the congruities that prevents alienation and social discord. As Anderson points out "Anyone with money can buy Czech cars; only Czech-readers will buy Czech-language books" (Anderson, 2006, p. 34). Thus the language is a strong symbolic marker of belonging, signified in daily life by the language of print media consumed. Being able to prove at least a basic level of competence is a pre-requisite for citizenship of many nation-states, including the Czech Republic. Czech is one of the smaller national languages

in Europe – it is the official language only in the Czech Republic and has minority language status only in Slovakia, therefore the ability to speak Czech 'fluently' is a key cultural marker that allows for the “mutual recognition” of members of the nation. Requiring migrants to learn the titular language appears in debates about migration and identity but can mask racism or anti-immigration sentiment (Schildkraut, 2005, p. 3). It is not surprising, therefore, that language was one of the key characteristics that emerged during interviews.

One respondent identified knowledge of the language (or lack thereof) as the most divisive factor between people in the Czech Republic: *“Sjednocuje je asi jazyk, rozděluje je znalost jazyka”*[166] (Jan). Whilst on the face of things, knowledge of the language may seem like a reasonable pre-requisite for acceptance into a national in-group, problems arise with this when *“znalost”* (knowledge or familiarity) might mean different things to different people. The level of knowledge that is required to undertake necessary everyday tasks is very different from that required to have, for example, a fulfilling social life with other speakers of the language, and different again from being able to take an informed part in public or academic discourses. Whilst knowledge of the language is often associated with more populist ethno-linguistic forms of nationalism, this remark does not make any connection between the language spoken and the ethnicity of the speaker (nor did the respondent at any point in the interview). He appears more concerned with the barriers to participation in society that can only be overcome by knowing the national language well. Another respondent linked language more directly to ethnicity and a sense of belonging to one particular ethnic group rather than another:

> *“Nicméně koncept národní hrdosti je pro mě vlastně něco trochu vzdělaného – já cítím spíš zodpovědnost za zemi v které jsem se narodila, sounáležitost nebo spojení s dalšími, kteří mluví česky a jsou nasákli ‚českou kulturou‘ čímž jsme si blíže než s někým z Mongolska …”* [167](Daniela).

[166] “It’s probably language that unites them, but knowledge of the language divides them, too”.
[167] “Nevertheless, the concept of national pride is to me something a little intellectual – I rather feel responsible for the country I was born in and feel a sense of belonging or connection with others who speak Czech and are soaked in Czech culture, which we’re closer to than someone from Mongolia …”.

This statement reveals a sense of the complexity around feeling part of a national or linguistic community. It is accepted that a person might naturally feel closer to those with whom communication is effortless and cultural meanings are easily shared and understood, but this is tempered by the understanding that national pride is, or at least can be, an artificial construct, and an outdated one at that: "*Svět je čím dál víc propojený, hranice mizí a lpění na národním a národu může způsobit jen problémy a nenávist*"[168] (Daniela). These remarks display a level of cognitive dissonance that occurs when feeling part of a group based on language and location, but at the same time acknowledging that these feelings necessitate the exclusion of others who are not part of this group and that this is not easily rationalised or justified.

The characteristics and traits that respondents used to describe their fellow Czechs reflected those identified in by Holý. These themes – that Czechs have a good sense of humour, drink a lot of beer, are politically passive, and must speak Czech - emerged consistently in the interviews. This leads to the question of whether comparing the two groups of respondents generates any discernible difference in how those who feel that their "Czechness" is an important part of their identity and those who do not perceive the nation. For the most part, these characteristics there was no discernible difference between the two groups, with respondents discussing with amused resignation about the propensity of Czechs to drink rather too much beer and not take themselves too seriously. The one characteristic which was markedly more commented on by those who didn't consider being Czech very important to them was that of passivity. Two thirds of those who brought up the issue of political passiveness and lack of civic engagement belonged to this group. It is interesting to note that those who apparently feel less of an attachment to their national identity seem to feel more keenly the lack of appetite for collective action.

7.2.3 The Importance of History to Czech Identity

A question about how respondents saw the role of history in the development of national identity was included in the interview schedule: *"Jakou roli má,*

[168] "The world is more and more connected; borders are breaking down and sticking to a nationality or nation can only cause problems and hatred".

podle Vás, historie ve vývoji národní totožnosti?"[169]. There was near universal agreement among respondents that history plays an important or fundamental role - when this question was posed directly, it was most often met with "*zásadní"* or *"absolutně zásadní"* ("Fundamental" or "Absolutely fundamental"), but as the theme emerged more naturally during the course of the interviews, different opinions emerged about just what this role might be. One of the main ways that history was seen to affect contemporary Czech identity was through the incorporation and accommodation of - or reaction against - outside influence in shaping the contemporary Czech Republic. One respondent cites, with some surprise, the positive impact of Germanization under Austro-Hungarian rule:

> "*We definitely had a big influence from Germany, and after a few years living abroad, I decided that that's a good thing, because I can see how Polish people didn't have the influence from German people and how it looks like there"* (Julie).

Evaluating the German influence on the Czech lands after living in Poland refers principally to the physical environment (Poland can hardly be said to have been free of Germanizing forces throughout its history). The baroque architecture that characterises many Czech towns is a legacy of the period of Austro-Hungarian rule. The respondent's surprise at a positive legacy is perhaps explained by the common characterisation of the period from the Battle of White Mountain to the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic as "three hundred years of darkness". The comparison with Poland, however, supports Mummendey et al.'s finding that positive evaluation of one's own social group is enhanced by the denigration of an Other. In this case, the positive evaluation of one significant Other is tempered by comparing the Czech Republic favourably to Poland.

The negative influence of the communist period, during which Czechoslovakia was dominated by the Soviet Union, is implied by the following comment:

> *"I think we had some … ideals in the nineteenth century, during this* Národní Obrození *[national revival], there were some ideals … there were some contrasting ideals, like, for example, pan-Slavism, and also very purely nationalist, but it's dead now, nobody is concerned with it now … I*

[169] "What sort of role do you think history has in the development of national identity?".

also think that in the 1st half of the 20th Century there was a very strong notion of the humanistic purpose of Czech nation or Czechoslovak nation and I'm very proud of that heritage, but I don't think that's the case today after the communist era" (Natalie).

Although the accusation is oblique, it is suggested that the communist era destroyed the "humanistic purpose of [the] Czech nation." The ethno-linguistic "nation-building" nationalism of the National Revival is rejected outright as irrelevant, however, the reference to the "humanistic purpose" of the First Republic echoes the "Golden Age" trope typical of more nationalistic narratives (Mock, 2014, p 223). Several respondents, whilst keen to distance their own views from overt nationalism, discussed the role of history in the nationalist narratives of far-right groups in the Czech Republic, who regularly invoke imagery of the Hussite movement to promote their vision of a mono-ethnic Czech state:

> *"I think it depends on groups of people, because there are a lot of ultra-nationalists … I think neo-fascists or something like this and they really identify themselves with history, the Hussites movement and that . They are very stupid, but there are a lot of them …"* (Lucie).

The clear contempt for these "ultra-nationalists" (often skinheads who have their own distinct sub-cultural identity) is tempered by concern at their prevalence, which can be seen from the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations which often descend into violence (Cakl and Wollman, 2005, pp. 37 - 44). Their utilisation of historical symbols in their discourses to support racist ideals leads to questions over which symbols are valid representations of the nation and which are not: *"… the young neo-fascists, they know the Hussite movement and they talk a lot about it, but they don't know about Charles IV and the others …"* (Natalie). This raises the issue of whether or not identifying oneself with a nation is dependent on knowledge of history, and whether this is related to what is taught in schools. The only respondents who were ambivalent about the importance of history to national identity brought up the fact that, like these ultra-nationalists, it is possible for people to identify strongly with a nation, without actually being particularly well informed about the history of that nation:

> *"national identity is rooted in my culture, but our culture is rooted in our*

history, so yeah, it is connected but not so much … for example Czechs, even young Czechs have some sort of Czech identity, but they don't know Czech history, sadly … Some young people now, they don't know what happened in 1968, they don't know what happened in 1989" (Natalie).

Being uninformed about the nation's past, even its recent past, is seen as a source of regret, but not necessarily a barrier to being or feeling part of the nation. In citing the symbolically significant dates here of 1968 and 1989, the respondent hints at the importance of contextualising events; without context the dates become merely symbolic, and as symbols they are open to manipulation – for example in the way that the imagery associated with the Hussite army has been hijacked by the far-right groups (Mareš, 2009); or how they were earlier appropriated by communist authorities as social reformers. This sentiment is echoed by some other respondents, for example Daniela, who in response to being asked about the role of history to national identity replied: "*Nevím … možná ne tak velkou, jak se zdá, lidé tolik vlastní historii neznají …"*[170]. This raises the issue of the overall role of the history curriculum in forming national identity. After all what is *learned* in school as opposed to what is "taught" (i.e. what the textbooks and teachers seek to impart) depends very much on factors such as the level of the pupil's ability, the skill of the teacher and individual motivation levels. Throughout the interviews (both with the student and teacher groups, there was a perception of decline in the level of knowledge in and interest in learning about history: *"I still think that Czech history is very important today. Maybe the youngest generation doesn't really care, but our generation has a really good knowledge of history"* (Petr). There is a sense of pride in being well informed about the national history, as this knowledge is something that legitimises a sense of belonging.

Due to the general agreement amongst interviewees about the importance of history to the formation of national identity, comparison of these two groups' views is not likely to be informative. However, the fact that the majority - even those who did not feel a strong sense of national identity

[170] *"I don't know … possibly not so huge, as it seems that people don't know their own history"*.

themselves - still regarded history as having an important role to play in forming national identity, indicates a level of uncertainty about what this role is. During the interviews, several perspectives emerged: firstly, that there are some people who feel that it is the national history itself that forms the national identity; secondly, some indicated that knowledge of the past leads to a better understanding of, and therefore stronger identification with, the present; and finally, there are those that feel that an educational grounding is necessary to enable critical understanding of how historical discourses are capable of being used to promote particular identities, and how these may or may not be grounded in historical "reality". Whilst there was no explicit relationship between the extent to which respondents felt that their national identity was important to them and how they saw the role of history in shaping the national identity, those who most strongly identified their national identity as a core part of their own identity were most concerned about those who retain a strong sense of identification with the nation without knowledge of history, perceiving a decline in standards of historical education in younger generations. This perceived decline in standards will be further explored in the discussion of the teacher interviews.

7.2.4 History Lessons

The place of history education in attempts to train national citizens is well established - even if its role is not always clear. The debates surrounding attempts to reform national history curricula in the UK are intertwined with those about the role of English or British national identity in an increasingly globalised world and multicultural domestic environment (see, for example: Mansell, 2013). On the one side of this debate are those who feel that fostering a strong national identity among the majority population should be the priority, and that only with a strong foundation of national "self-confidence" can a nation-state begin to safely consider the cultural claims of its minority groups. According to this perspective. history teaching should promote a thorough knowledge of an officially sanctioned narrative of the nation's past, thus fostering pride in the nation's history among all members of the nation. There is a self-perpetuating circularity involved in this process – the "official" narrative that is sanctioned to be taught in schools is influenced by what the policy makers themselves were taught in school; what is taught in schools then

becomes the “official” narrative because it is taught in schools (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 66-67). This method of history teaching is endorsed in the United Kingdom by the strongly nationalist (and arguably racist) United Kingdom Independence Party, which argues for the promotion of a positive view of national history in schools, taught chronologically. Although they are ostensibly against the exclusion of history that portrays the nation negatively, this ignores the fact that the devising of a curriculum to be completed within a certain period of compulsory schooling necessitates the selection of material and that selecting that which is most likely to promote national pride is likely to necessitate the exclusion of more troublesome episodes of the nation's past. The flipside of this argument is that all children should be educated in a way that promotes respect for difference and tolerance, not promoting any worldview at the expense of others. This presents similar problems regarding the selection of material to be taught, given that the range of material to be considered is even wider, and its opponents would argue that this approach is just as ideologically driven. When re-designing the history curriculum after 1989, educators in the Czech Republic had to make decisions about what to include and what to omit from the history curriculum against the more complicated backdrop of regime change and later also the loss of territory.

The most “classically” and obviously state-building curricula are centrally prescribed and internally focused, promoting a positive view of the nation-state and often denigrating external Others with whom there exists historical tensions, or leaving out controversial aspects of the nation’s history. Teaching history in strict chronological order is also a feature of such curricula, giving the impression that the present time represents a fixed and inevitable point in a linear narrative. However, the full implementation of a curriculum centrally devised and distributed along such straightforwardly nation-building terms would not have been likely to take place in the Czech Republic, firstly due to resistance from staff to “top-down” diktats in a recently liberated system, and later on due to prospective EU membership discouraging such an approach. Promoting positive relationships between the national ethnic and linguistic majorities and their significant Others, whether internal or external is a key element of anti-discrimination legislation in the EU (Council of Europe, 1995). Official curricular documents from the post-accession period abound with phrases such as “positive civic attitudes” and “ learning tolerance and respect for human rights” (MŠMT, 2007, p. 41), demonstrating faith in the

ability of education to promote these values and ideals. In the run up to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU in 2004, an analysis undertaken of history textbooks recommended that future editions do more to promote inter-cultural understanding in their content (Projekt Varianty, 2002).

One of the most striking things about interviewees' answers to the question "*Co si myslíte, jaké byly nejdůležitější historické události, které se pamatujete z hodin dějepisu?"*[171] was less the answers themselves, but the manner of answering. This question was frequently met with a long list of events from Czech history, in chronological order, in the manner of something well known and learned by rote, from the arrival of Cyril and Methodius to the Velvet Revolution: *"[učili jsme] o ...příchodě Cyrila a Metoděje, době Karla IV., husitských válkách, připojení Čech k Habsburské monarchii, likvidaci protestantských církví, odchodu Komenského ... národním obrození, vzniku samostatného Československa, Protektorátu, o roce 1948, o roce 1968, o roce 1989..."*[172](Darja). Others referred to the linear presentation of events: *"Pak jsme … pak jsme jakoby od začátku přešli postupně dál a dostali jsme se možna někam k … 1935*"[173] (Anna). Such responses demonstrate that, in the mid- to late 1990s at least, the majority of interviewees were taught a curriculum that followed the pattern favoured by state-building nationalists: national history taught in chronological order (Hechter, 2004, pp. 65-66). The prominence given to specifically *national* history is suggested by the fact that, when asked about the "most important" historical events that they were taught about in school, even after clarification that the question did not specifically relate to Czech history, the vast majority focused on episodes from the Czech "national" past. This is not necessarily problematic, nor unique to the Czech case - the view that history begins at home is a prevalent one, and the national past forms a significant chunk of what is taught in history classrooms throughout Europe (Low-Beer, 1997). Several respondents also mentioned learning about ancient Egypt and also about Asian cultures as a key part of their historical education in primary school:

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[171] "What do you think were the most important historical events that you remember learning about in class?".

[172] ""[we learned about] the arrival of Cyril and Methodius, the era of Charles IV, the Hussite wars, the assimilation of the Czech lands to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the liquidation of the Protestant church, the exile of Comenius … the national revival, the disappearance of independent Czechoslovakia, the [period of] the Protectorate, about the years 1948, 1968, 1989 ...".

[173] "Then we went from the start progressively onwards until we got to somewhere around 1935".

> "*Pamatuji si, že jsme se učili hrozně moc o starověké Indii a starověkém Egyptě. Byla jsem dvakrát zkoušená z Indie … dostala jsem dvakát otazku o indické civilizaci a mluvila jsem dvakrát o indických záchodech splachovacích!"*[174] (Vera).

What is notable, however, is the consistency of such responses given that schools and teachers were freer than they had ever been to determine the content of their lessons, and the wide geographical spread of interviewees' schools.

That drilling of events of national symbolic importance took place was stated even more explicitly in another interview:

> *"[I remember] Mostly Czech things. Like I remember until now it was 863 that we got Christianity, and I remember 1610 [sic] was definitely Bílá Hora [White Mountain], and I didn't know the context until I was older, they were just giving us the information like in this year was happening this, this, this and nothing about it. Just the date"* (Julie).

The focus on the memorisation of dates and events with minimal context (especially in the primary stages of schooling) was another recurring theme: *"We had this list of years and you had to memorise what happened in each year …"* (Petr). The teaching of historical events as a series of dates and names without context in the early years of schooling is an approach that is likely to cement and legitimise the *symbolic* importance of the events learned in the minds of pupils. This approach impresses the idea that it is more important to know from an early age that certain events *are* important, rather than to know or understand their importance. As a pedagogical approach, this is perhaps the most openly associated with nation-building, as it creates the broad discourse within which identities are formed and whose narratives are "related to the historic positionings of the subjects involved, which are themselves constituted and given meaning by the identity makers" (Suny, 2001, p. 868). Whilst the majority of respondents had the opportunity to learn about the context of key events in secondary school, they had only learned the dates of these events in primary school, when the significance of these events was made clear. Presentation of material in this way becomes problematic when considering those who become disengaged with school and

[174] "I remember that we learned an awful lot about ancient India and Egypt. I had exams twice about Indian civilisation, and twice I talked about Indian flushing toilets!".

drop out early on. The recitation of the nation's "genealogy" is also mentioned by Holý – who says that it "makes the reader or listener aware of both the long and glorious history of the Czech nation and the existence of national traditions which are its product" (1996, p. 126). Crucially, he states that "all Czechs, even those with only a basic education, are able to mention a number of events and persons from the nation's past" (ibid.). This is a key point when considered alongside the fact that, in the Czech Republic, membership of far-right nationalist groups – regular invokers of national historical symbols – is closely correlated with earlier school leaving age (Cakl and Wollman, 2005, p. 44). By placing emphasis on symbolic events at an early stage, without context or analysis, their importance is legitimised but malleable and open to manipulation via other channels (either official or unofficial) by those who seek to invoke them for their own purposes.

During the course of the interviews, two specific historical events were raised more than any others – the Battle of White Mountain and the death of Jan Hus, either or both of which were brought up in nine of the twelve student interviews at various points, chiefly in response to the question about historical events learned about in school: *"Upálení Mistra Jana Husa ..."*[175] (Simon) and *"husitské hnutí, nástup Habsburků na trůn, bitva na Bílé hoře..."*[176] (Michal) . The emphasis placed on the Battle of White Mountain was clear from both the frequency of it occurring and also the from the respondents themselves:

> *" … ted' mi to splývá, protože nepamatuju si, co jsme dělali na základní škole a co jsme dělali na střední škole. Ze základní školy si nepamatuji skoro nic … a z té střední školy si pamatuji, že hodně mluvili o roku 1620 o národním obrození, a vůbec jsem nechapala, proč o tom tak moc mluvíme - ted´ už je to jasnější ale tenkrát to nebylo … a taky jsme mluvili o … no, o všech různých bitvách a válkách a o první a druhé světové válce, logicky"*[177] (Vera).

These events are of central symbolic significance in Czech culture and have been summoned at flashpoints in history to promote the concept of the nation

[175] "The burning of Jan Hus".
[176] "The Hussite movement, the accession of the Habsburgs to the throne, the battle of White Mountain …".
[177] "… I get it mixed up now, because I don't remember what we did in primary school and what we did in high school. From primary school I remember almost nothing … and from high school I remember that we talked an awful lot about the year 1620 and about the national revival, and I never understood why … now it's clearer, but at the time it wasn't … and we also talked about all the different battles and wars, and the First and Second World Wars, logically".

as a continuous historical entity that has been threatened and subjugated by outside forces (Mock, 2014; Heimann, 2009; Sayer, 1998; Holy, 1996). According to Holý, “they are invoked as symbols of the nation's character, traditions, aspirations, fears, and aims or as symbols of its uniqueness among other nations” (1996, p. 126), but they are also symbols of martyrdom and defeat by foreign aggressors. The dangers of promoting such “symbols of defeat” as key to the national narrative is discussed at length by Mock (2014), who argues that they can be used to justify the subjugation of minority ethnic groups in the name of strengthening the nation.

The interview responses concerned with the history lessons in school are instructive because they reveal what was *learned* at school, rather than what was *taught*. This helps to illustrate how changes to officially sanctioned transmission of knowledge (i.e. curricula and approved textbooks) can be influenced by pedagogical approaches, methods of assessment, and attitudes of individuals, teachers, and schools. That there was so much consistency across a wide geographical spread of schools which were theoretically free to teach what curricula they pleased is suggestive of the idea that the schools have played a role in perpetuating and legitimising an idea of the nation that favours the titular ethnic group.

7.2.5 Citizenship Education

Citizenship education occupies a unique place in the school curriculum. Unlike other subjects, its central and stated aim is not providing deep or broad knowledge of a particular subject or set of topics, or developing a specific set of skills, but rather “not only ‘educating citizens’ but also ‘training children for adulthood and citizenship’” (UNESCO, 1998). That this is taught as a discreet subject, rather than the sum of the component parts that constitute the curriculum suggests that there are particular skills that need to be developed or knowledge that needs to be imparted that is not covered by the usual range of subjects, yet are essential to the formation of “good” citizens “who participate in decisions concerning society”, where “society” is “understood in the special sense of a nation with a circumscribed territory which is recognized as a state”(ibid.) In other words, it is the only school subject with the explicit aim of equipping children to be good citizens of their *nation* state. It is through the citizenship education curriculum, then, that we might expect to see most

clearly how the nation state explicitly presents itself to its future citizens and what attributes it values most among them, as well as educating them about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. However, not all rights and responsibilities are the sole preserve of the nation state, and international agreements such as the United Nations Convention on Human Rights aim to safeguard the basic rights of everyone regardless of nationality. This has led to an expectation that citizenship education will involve a broader human rights-based curriculum that educates global citizens in order to promote social justice (or awareness of injustice) across the globe, not just within a given state (Human Rights Council, 2007).

In the Czech Republic, citizenship education is taught as a discreet subject from grade 6 and forms the basis of the study of social sciences. In the earliest years (grades 1-3), all subjects are consolidated into *"prvouka"*[178]*,*apart from music, art, physical education, mathematics, and languages.*"Prvouka"* has no English equivalent but can be explained roughly as an introduction to the sciences. It covers the most basic elements of the natural and social sciences. In grades 4 and 5 the social sciences are typically covered by *vlastivěda* (homeland studies), which emphasises familiarity with the physical landscape of the Czech Republic and its influence on the population: "*V předmětu vlastivěda se ve 4. a 5. ročníku věnujeme především tématu Domov, obec a krajina České republiky … Věnujeme se vlivu krajiny na život lidí, působení lidí na krajinu a životní prostředí."*[179] (Málotřídní škola, n.d.) It also includes a basic overview of Czech history, from the ancient past up to the "return to democracy", and locates the Czech Republic firmly within a European context acquainting pupils with European states and capitals, and encouraging familiarity with the EU as well as the geography of European countries. The explicit emphasis on familiarity with the natural features of the nation state's territory and its history is the element of Czech schooling that would most obviously link to a state-building agenda, as it promotes the idea that the territory and state are inextricably linked. The name of the subject, too "*vlastivěda"* carries connotations of belonging and ownership. In the sixth grade, *vlastivěda* branches off into the social subjects of history, geography,

[178] "Fundamentals of natural sciences and citizenship".
[179] "The subject Homeland Studies in the 4th and 5th grade is mainly devoted to the theme of home, community, and the landscape of the Czech Republic … We are interested in the influence of landscape on people's lives, human influence on the landscape and the environment".

citizenship studies, and *"rodinná výchova*" which translates roughly as family-life education. After *základní škola, občanská nauka* (Citizenship Education) focuses on different aspects of the social sciences, such as politics, philosophy, and economics. The order of introduction of the subjects is important here, as if it flows as outlined above, it could be argued that building affiliation to the "homeland" takes precedence over developing a citizenship in a wider, more civic sense by being introduced first, at an earlier age when children are arguably more impressionable.

Prior to the publication of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP], when many of the interviewees attended school, there were no specific guidelines for the content or weighting of any subject, therefore it was left to individual schools to determine how citizenship should be taught. Even now, the ultimate decision about whether it is taught as a discreet subject is down to individual schools (Eurydice, 2012, p. 22). This lack of formal structure is not unique to the Czech Republic, however – citizenship education did not become part of the national curriculum in the UK until 2002 (Race, 2015, p. 98). The student respondents were asked first of all if they had received any citizenship education, and if so to describe it. In comparison to the description of their history lessons, then answers were brief and often vague. All but one responded that they had received some sort of citizenship education (under that name). The responses from students revealed something of their attitudes towards citizenship lessons in school. On the whole, it did not seem to be taken seriously and was easily dismissed: "Well, it was the easy subject we did at primary school it was like basic stuff you know already, like what does it mean to have a family and there would be bullet points like 'safety' or 'education'. You know, these things" (Natalie); "[we learned] these kind of things like you can't spend more than you earn – very interesting information like that!" (Petr). Others emphasised how boring the subject was "*Ano [měli jsme], většinou obsah spočíval v nudném zapisování definic*"[180] (Vera) … "*to bylo hrozně nudné!*"[181] (Barbora). What was particularly striking about the responses from those who gave a detailed description was the breadth of topics covered, which ranged from family and relationships to political structures. A few students pointed out that in

[180] "Yes, we had it. It mostly consisted of writing down boring definitions".
[181] "It was awfully boring!".

gymnázium the subject was broken down further into a basic introduction to the social sciences as academic disciplines, showing stringer classification and framing in the more academically focused schools: "*Na gymnáziu jsme měli místo toho základy společenských věd, np. psychologie, sociologie, ekonomie, právo* … "[182] (Michal).

In the interviews, however, two main strands emerged as the focus of citizenship education: the state and role of citizens within the state; and family and relationships. These two strands attempt to address "training children for adulthood and citizenship" (UNESCO, 2010). The broad scope of the citizenship curriculum makes it uniquely flexible and malleable, and therefore more able to respond quickly to changing priorities, as well as changing social and political circumstances. However, weak framing and classification make it more likely that the content is potentially more subject to schools', teachers' and head teachers' personal beliefs and values than subjects with more clearly defined content. This was reflected in the range of responses.

Several students identified their citizenship lessons as the place that they had formalised learning about the Czech state, its symbols and institutions, as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens within it: "*We learned things like we are citizens of the Czech Republic, we learned how our flag looks ...*" (Lucie). The formalisation of this type of learning which students may be expected to pick up incidentally during the course of their day-to-day lives and interactions might at first seem trivial (and indeed it seems to be perceived as such by many of the student respondents). However, by including it in classroom learning, it gives symbolic weight to the information imparted and enforces that such information is important for students to know, implying that personal identification with these symbols is an important part of being a Czech citizen. Another student mentioned that information about the Czech state was the first topic covered in their citizenship lessons "*Nejprve jsme se učili základy o státu Česká republika …"*[183] (Simon), again encouraging the idea that knowledge of (and by implication identification with) the nation state is a fundamental element of citizenship. In spite of this, only one student explicitly mentioned *vlastivěda* as forming the basis of their citizenship education: "*Well, we have this thing called "vlastivěda" that starts around grade*

[182] "At the grammar school instead we had basic social sciences, for example psychology, sociology, economics, law …".
[183] "First of all, we learned basic things about the state of the Czech Republic".

three …" (Julie). Not all students felt that there was a particularly national focus in their citizenship education, but on the contrary *"… it wasn't nationalist at all as far as I remember it was … civic ...*" (Petr); another recalled discussion over freedom, rights and responsibilities in general, rather than national contexts "*Na základní škole jsme diskutovali o svobodě člověka jeho právech a povinnostech*"[184] (Daniela). These responses suggest that the lack of consistent guidelines for citizenship education was reflected in inconsistent interpretations of what the subject should include.

For some respondents, the "training for adulthood" involved in citizenship education also included lessons on and discussion of family and relationships: *"Na základní škole jsme brali základní věci týkající se České republiky, fungování rodiny, vztahů a tak dál ..."*[185] (Anna). What is interesting about this is the implicit link between the family and the state. Combining in one subject lessons about the proper functioning of the two suggests that the two are linked and of similar importance. It is this symbolic separation or grouping of subjects that re-contextualises the information officially imparted by altering symbolic boundaries and attempts to create connections between the two in the minds of students (Berstein, 2000, p. 7). This could be regarded as promoting the primordial idea that the nation is "coeval with the family" (Smith, 2009, p. 8). This is particularly significant in the Czech context, given Holý's (1996) observations on the "retreat into the private sphere" that took place under communism as a reaction to excessive state control. Teaching family relationships under the same subject heading as the functioning of the state and the role of the citizen symbolically blurs this boundary distinction between the public and private spheres. This is possible thanks to the capacity of an ill-defined curriculum subject to cover so much disparate ground - from state symbols to inter-personal relationships - in a way that seems natural: "*Ano, probírala se rodina, vztahy, drogy, pohlavní nemoci. Dále pak nauka o státu, hymna, vlajka a tak dál. Kladl se malý důraz na sebepoznávání a rozvoj skutečných dovědnosti pro život – inter a intrapersonálních."*[186] (Anna).

Race (2014, p. 222) points out the importance of pedagogy in teaching

[184] "In primary school we discussed the freedom of man, his rights and duties".
[185] "In primary school we did basic things about the Czech Republic, the function of the family, relationships and so on …".
[186] "Yes, we did the family relationships, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases. Then we did things about the state – the anthem, flag and so on. There was a little about self-awareness and developing life-skills – inter and intrapersonal".

citizenship, especially when tackling issues like racism and multiculturalism. The lack of engagement with the subject illustrated by most respondents highlights this. Only one respondent spoke fondly of their citizenship classes, remembering materials that provoked thoughtful discussion: ""*Pamatuji si na příběhy, kdy kamarádi našeho věku v učebnici řešili smrt, sex, a etické otázky, to mě bavilo. Diskutovali jsme, v rámci možností*"[187] (Jan) – quite the opposite experience of the student whose experience consisted of "writing boring definitions". This demonstrates the importance of methodology and approach to teaching citizenship, as well as the specified content, in order to engage students.

The overall impression from the total responses to the question on citizenship education was that the subject was not treated especially seriously by students, that it was not as academically rigorous as other subjects, and that the lessons covered common-sense topics that people had already learned about at home. Inter-group comparison between the two groups of respondents must be tentative, but it is worth noting that all but one of those who mentioned learning specifically about the Czech Republic belonged to the group who felt that being Czech is an important part of their identity.

7.2.6 Language Learning

The central role of language education in nation-building and demonstrating external affiliations is well documented. In the post-communist transition states, the trend was overwhelmingly in favour of removing Russian from the curriculum and, where this was not already the case, moving towards having the titular language as the main medium of instruction in all public schools. In some countries (e.g. the Baltic States) this was part of an explicit nation-building agenda, which had at its core an assimilationist agenda with regard to linguistic minorities (Galbreath, 2005; Brubaker, 2011). Other countries, such as Ukraine, opted to retain their system of parallel Russian and Ukrainian language schools. In the Czech Republic, as discussed in the literature review, Czech was already the dominant language medium and schools for linguistic minorities had been in steady decline throughout the communist period. Post-transition, pupils of officially recognised national minorities retained their right

[187] "I remember stories where friends of our age in the textbook answered questions about death, sex, and ethical questions, I liked that. We had discussions as far as possible".

to education in their own language (or, in the case of Roma, gained this right as they became an officially recognised minority). Nevertheless, with the exception of a small number of secondary schools that teach different subjects through different languages (Lenochová, 1996), Czech was and remains overwhelmingly the language of instruction in primary schools.

Foreign language education became compulsory from the age of nine (i.e. the beginning of the upper stage of *základní škola*). The time allotted to learning a modern foreign language in this stage of schooling was set at a minimum of 135 minutes per week by the Ministry of Education from 1997, clearly establishing modern languages as one of the core elements of the curriculum. The languages to be taught were not rigidly prescribed, although in reality "The actual choice of first foreign language is balanced between German and English because knowledge of these languages influences professional career opportunities" (Lenochová, 1996, p. 14). This pragmatic justification rather draws a veil over the implied re-orientation of the country's ideological and economic allegiances towards "Western Europe", but was nevertheless reflected in the interviewees' experiences of language teaching at school – where a choice was available to interviewees, it was generally between English and German, with some also having the option of French. Some had no choice at all due to lack of qualified staff, and had to learn either German or English, depending on the teacher's competence. "*v případě němčiny jsem neměla na výběr - byla povinná na základní škole"*[188] (Daniela). Only one respondent had the alternative option of learning Russian.

The limited range of options available to language learners in the 1990s illustrates how the state-school system had altered in response to the changed political climate of the era. Whilst not subject to the same state-building approach of more ethnically divided post-communist countries (Brubaker, 2011), there does seem to have been political motivation behind these changes, which were implemented in spite of logistical difficulties, and possibly at the cost of quality of teaching. Much like how the compulsory French lessons in the early years of secondary school in the UK has not produced a nation of confident Francophones, the compulsory learning of Russian in Czech schools did not automatically produce a bilingual nation. However, it did at least ensure a steady supply of qualified teachers – the shift towards

[188] "In the case of German, I had no choice – it was compulsory at primary school".

German and English necessitated the rapid retraining of a large swathe of the workforce (Lenochová, 1996). This is perhaps the most obvious example of the state utilising the state-school system to shape the future orientation of its citizens by equipping them with the linguistic skills they would most likely need for participation in the economic sphere of the European Union. However, this shift in foreign language teaching was typical of post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe and by no means unique to the Czech Republic (see, for example: Brubaker, 2011; Galbreath, 2005; Wilczynski, 1993). Therefore, it is instructive to look at the rationales given for the participants' choice of language in the cases that such a choice was available to them. This provides some insight into the forces beyond the political which made this shift seem attractive.

The most common reasons given for choosing to study English were its status as an international language *"Studoval jsem angličtinu, protože je světový jazyk číslo jedna …"*[189] (Jan); *"[vybrala jsem] angličtinu, protože je to mezinárodní jazyk, kterým se domluvím téměř všude"*[190] (Anna) or as an investment for the future: *"[vybrala jsem anglictinu] jako investici do budoucnosti. Z dnešního pohledu je to nutnost, něco, co by mělo patřit k výbavě každého člověka"*[191](Darja). Where there was no option available in schools to learn English, private instruction was sought outside of school hours, paid for by parents who also considered knowledge of English to be key to their child's life chances "*angličtinu jsem studoval v soukromé jazykové škole ... Důvod byl ten, že angličtinu považovali mí rodiče za nezbytnou pro moji úspěšnou budoucnost"*[192](Simon). Whether or not this perception of speaking English as an economic necessity was correct or well informed, it is difficult to see how a sound knowledge of any international language can be detrimental to a person's life chances. The choice to provide this for children where the state school system lacks the capacity appears a rational one.

German was the second most common language studied after English among participants, although as previously discussed, this was more often a result of necessity than choice. Where German was chosen, the most common

[189] "I studied English because it is the world number one language".
[190] "I chose English because it's an international language you can use almost everywhere".
[191] "I chose English as an investment for the future. From today's perspective, it's a necessity, something that should be in everyone's toolkit".
[192] "I studied English in a private language school. The reason was that my parents regarded English as something necessary for my success in the future".

reason given was the proximity to Germany and Austria *"[vybrala jsem] němčinu kvůli blízkosti německy mluvících zemí"*[193] (Vera). German fared worse when a choice was offered with French, for aesthetic rather than economic reasons: *"francouzštinu zájmově, protože mám ráda Francii, je měkčí a romantičtější než němčina"* [194] (Barbora). French was more commonly offered at secondary level as a second or third foreign language (Lenochová, 1996). Only one response gave a clear indication of an ideological element in the decision of which language to learn: "*Z němčiny nebo ruštiny jsem volil němčinu částečně pod vlivem rodinného postoje k Rusku, maminčiny aprobace (pracuje jako překladatelka a tlumočnice němčiny a angličtiny) a také pro geografickou blízkost Německa, rodinným vztahům tam a využitelnosti jazyka pro porozumění dalším germánským jazykům … tak tohle spíš řešili rodiče!"*[195] (Michal). In this case, parental attitudes towards Russia were a significant factor in deciding against the study of Russian in the only case where this was given as an option to any of those interviewed.

Once again, due to the lack of comparable choice of language studied between interviewees, comparing the two groups will not produce a useful comparison of how the languages learned at school impact on the formation of national identity. However, it is worth noting that when asked to describe their national or ethnic identity, respondents were more likely to include "European" as an element (six out of twelve), rather than "Slav" (three out of twelve). Although due to the small sample size it is not possible to draw a generalisable conclusion from this, it is clear that by limiting the choice of language available to study at state-funded elementary schools, the Czech state education system helped to affect a reorientation of language skills (and by extension of this cultural awareness) towards Western Europe, away from linguistically closer Slavic nations - a re-orientation Mitter relates to the resurgence of nationalism during the same period (1992, p. 25). Although the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] does not prescribe which languages ought to be learned as first or second foreign

[193] "I chose German because of the proximity of German speaking countries".
[194] "French interested me, because I like France and it's softer and more Romantic than German".
[195] "Out of German or Russian I chose German, partly because of my family's attitude towards Russia, partly for my mother's approval (she works as a translator and interpreter of German and English), and also because of the geographical proximity of Germany, family relations, and the usefulness of the language for understanding other Germanic languages … so that's how my parents solved it!".

languages, the structural framework established in the early transformation period makes it likely that the same limitations faced by students then will be reproduced for successive generations.

7.2.7 Learning about Other Cultures

Besides language education, the social subjects are generally the main source of information about non-national cultures in schools but could conceivably take place either formally or informally in almost any subject area (Banks, 1992, pp. 90-91). Like language education, the content (or existence of) education about other cultures in schools can provide insight into a state's ideological affiliations and aspirations. Since education about other cultures could take place across the curriculum in subject areas outwith the scope of this thesis, participants were asked in general terms which other countries they had learned about at *základní škola* and what types of things they remembered learning about. Respondents felt that a significant effort was made to impart at least some knowledge of other cultures and nations, particularly in history and geography classes. The geographical orientation of teaching in history lessons in European states varies from country to country, with most focusing on national history and some on European history (Low-Beer, 1997, p. 22).

The responses showed that although some respondents were conscious of a Western-looking orientation in their education about other nations and cultures, others felt that theirs was fairly comprehensive, encompassing the majority of other countries: *"[učili jsme] o většině. Ať už v historii nebo geografii"*[196] (Barbora) or the whole world: *"[učili jsme] o celém světě"*[197] (Jan). Whether these responses indicate that a genuinely comprehensive overview was provided or whether these participants felt that this was the case is not clear, but more detailed responses from other interviewees indicate that that most students' education at least touched upon the largest world cultures. One student noted a particular omission of detail in relation to learning about Africa: *"[Učili jsme se] o všech [zemích], ale méně podrobně o afrických státech"*[198] (Vera) which does indicate that even more

[196] "We learned about the majority. In history or geography".
[197] "We learned about the whole world".
[198] "We learned about all countries, but less details about African states".

“exotic” cultures (from a European perspective) were in fact taught, albeit not in much detail.

Ultimately, however, most participants' answers revealed that, even where their education about other countries was broad, the depth of coverage of (Western) European history indicates that this constituted the main part of education about other cultures: *“V zeměpise [jsme se učili] snad o všech, v dějepise o tzv. Západu, pokud jde o starší historii, tak samozřejmě o významných starověkých říších"*[199](Daniela). This respondent makes clear that geography was where the broader education took place, whilst more in-depth study took place in history lessons, which were focused on Europe. This hierarchy of the level of detail was confirmed by other respondents: *“[učili jsme se] především o Evropě a pak o zbylých kontinentech do stejné hlouboky, do velké hloubky o České republice.”*[200] (Michal); *“Pokud možno všech, o zemích ze všech částí světa s jasným důrazem na Evropu”*[201](Simon). The consistent focus on European history is easily justified by the concept of “relevance” in education, which can be divided into two types: personal and contextual (Vermunt, 2005, pp. 207-209). For something to be personally relevant to a student, it must in some way connect to their own experience and/or aspirations; contextual relevance relates to the “real-world” problems or situations that a student is likely to encounter outside of school. Focusing on European countries can be justified on both counts, as potential (and actual) EU membership was an early goal of the Czech Republic, which would provide Czechs with the opportunity to live and work in other member states, increasing personal and contextual relevance on top of what might already have existed due to family ties etc. However, focusing extensively on the history of one continent might exclude pupils who do not come from European family backgrounds, thereby potentially contributing to a sense of alienation or Otherness among migrant children from further afield.

According to another interviewee, the Western orientation extends to the Americas: *“We learned about Europe, mostly, but also the Americas, but from a European perspective, mostly – how it was discovered, and you know, how the settlement was established”* (Lucie). That “the Americas” in the plural

[199] “In geography we learned about almost everywhere, in terms of history, we learned about the so-called West, ancient history, so of course about the significance of ancient empires”.
[200] “We learned first of all about Europe and then other continents to the same level of detail. We learned about the Czech Republic in greater depth”.
[201] “Where possible, about all the countries of the world, with a clear focus on Europe”.

is referred to here indicates that not only the USA was covered, put perhaps Central and/or South America too. However, another respondent implies that their learning was more focused on North America, where it extended beyond Europe: *"Well, I think that our history is pretty much European history. German history a lot, but also Mediterranean. I think as far as Europe and North America is concerned, we have a really good general overview"* (Petr). This suggests that the shift in orientation that was reflected in the choice of foreign languages taught in schools extended to other curriculum areas too. Just as Russian language instruction was all but eradicated from Czech schools in the nineteen-nineties, it seems that Russian history was too. Only one respondent mentioned learning anything at all about Russia: *"[Učili jsme se o] Egyptě, ŘÍmu, Řecku, Německu, Francii, Velké Británii, Rusku ..."*[202] (Anna). However, it appears that breadth of information was prioritised over depth with learning dates and facts out of context: *"… [učili jsme se] hlavně data, fakta. Historické události bez souvislostí a společensko-kulturního kontextu."*[203] (Anna).

Overall, the responses to questions about learning about other cultures revealed that the majority of participants felt that they were taught about "Western" cultures in considerable detail, but that some people were aware of a gap in their education, particularly with regards to non-white cultures. Together with the fact that only one respondent mentioned learning about Russia, what has been taught in school about other cultures, like the languages taught, appears to support Mitter's (1992) argument that the period of economic and political transformation led to a rush to re-orient school syllabi from East to West.

7.2.8 Relations to Internal and External Others

The shift in orientation towards Western Europe, the loss of territory that accompanied the "Velvet Divorce", and the legal recognition of the Roma population as a national minority in 1992 all prompted a recalibration of the relationships between the "Czech" people (or at least those who consider themselves to be Czech) and their significant Others. Although the interview schedules did not include any direct questions regarding attitudes towards any

[202] "We learned about Egypt, Rome, Greece, Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia …".
[203] "We learned mostly dates, facts. Historical events without context or socio-cultural connections".

particular ethnic group, state, or organisation, opinions were volunteered in response to other questions that demonstrate how some Others are seen by the interviewees.

The significant Other that was most positively evaluated by far was Slovakia. Slovakia and Slovaks were spoken of with affection that reflects the big brother/little brother relationship between the Czech and Slovak parts of Czechoslovakia described by Holý, in which the Czechs assumed, but sought to disguise or justify, a dominant role (1996, p. 93). As one respondent put it: "*I think we also have a very good relationship with the Slovaks. We are very similar, and I think basically every Czech likes every Slovak. I think we still tend to stick together a lot …"* (Lucie). What is striking about this statement, apart from the unilateral declaration of a "good relationship" without reference to the other party, is the fact that the respondent feels able to speak for the majority of Czechs. This suggests that a feeling of a united Czech nation that has a largely undifferentiated relationship towards an Other exists in the mind of the speaker. Another interviewee sought to underline the "Otherness" of the Slovak nation, whilst not seeking to denigrate it in any way:

> *"But I wanted to underline that there was a deliberate effort to make Czechs and Slovaks connected as one nation. It is clear that we are not one ethnic nation – we are a cultural – no, a political nation, so there was a deliberate effort to make us one nation. Maybe that's why we still stick together a lot"* (Petr).

Here, a clear awareness of the political construction of nations is demonstrated. However, while stating that the Czechoslovak nation was clearly such a construct, he implies that there is a degree of ethnic cohesion in the separate Czech and Slovak nations that makes the current delineation of national borders more natural than those that had existed prior to the break-up of Czechoslovakia. This suggests that the participant feels that a degree of ethnic homogeneity is necessary for a successful nation state.

Although it is largely ethnically homogeneous, with over 90% of the population identifying as Czech, the Czech Republic nevertheless is home to a number of minorities, principally Moravian, Slovak, Polish, German and Roma. Although Roma represent small percentage of the total population

(officially, 1.9% in the 2001 census, but estimated to be around 2-3%), the issue that was raised most frequently in response to questions about the biggest social and political problems in the Czech Republic was that of the relationship between Czechs and Roma living in the Czech Republic. Interviewees' attitudes fell into two categories – those who felt that the presence (or at least the behaviour of) Roma in the Czech Republic was the biggest social problem, and those who felt that discrimination against and racism towards Roma was the biggest social problem. Recurrent phrases in response to this question were *"xenofobie a rasismus"* ("xenophobia and racism") *"nenávist k Romům"* ("Hatred towards Roma") and *"diskriminace"* ("discrimination"). The latter group was by far most represented (only two of the student participants explicitly spoke of Roma as a social problem in themselves). Given the persistence of reports of discrimination against Roma across Czech society, in areas such as education and media, it is reasonable that those two participants' views are not isolated examples. According Čaněk and Wollman, "there is an attitude in Czech public opinion that holds that minorities should not have markedly more rights than they have now, and they should submit to the interests and the demands of the majority" (2005, p. 49). The negative comments made related to a perceived reluctance among Roma to work - *"Sociální dávky (benefits) are too high. They changed it ... But still it's too much, like I heard that one gypsy family gets 20,000 kč a month for doing nothing"* (Julie) - and preferential treatment in the media *"připadá mi, že existuje nějaká pozitivní diskriminace v médiích ..."*[204] (Jan). Both of these interviewees were asked, after making these remarks if they had been aware of any Roma pupils at their school. Both answered that they hadn't, despite living in towns that had a fairly high Roma population. This lack of integration is typical and indicative of the *de facto* segregation of Roma pupils into special schools that continues, despite being successfully challenged in the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *D. H. and Others*. Although it is impossible to state that an end to segregation in schools would directly improve relationships between Czechs and Roma living in the Czech Republic, it is arguably one of the most important steps towards doing so (Amnesty International, 2013). Although citizenship education has the potential to address issues such as racism in society and promote positive

[204] "It seems to me that there is some positive discrimination in the media".

attitudes to multiculturalism in society (Race, 2011), the limits of schools' capacity to affect such changes was observed by one respondent. When asked how well schooling had prepared him to face the challenges of life in the Czech Republic replied: *"Jaké jsou výzvy moderní české společnosti? Nebýt rasistou? Tak na to mě škola nepřipravila, spíše rodina"*[205] (Michal). This response indicates a view that the responsibility for inculcating values for some lies more in the private than the public domain.

Although the EU itself was seldom mentioned directly, overall attitudes towards Europeanisation were generally positive, with some of the respondents who did not regard their "Czechness" as a core element of their identity claiming closer affiliation to a wider European identity. One clear exception to this attitude came from a respondent who had identified Roma as one of the main social problems in the Czech Republic: *"And it's actually the problem that pissed me off a lot, is that the EU is talking to us about this problem [discrimination against Roma] and they don't have any idea what it is about and they are just telling us what we should do not to look racist. Fuck them"* (Julie). This comment, although isolated, expresses feelings toward the EU that echo the resistance to top-down influence that is characteristic of anti-EU discourses across Europe. There is a sense in this comment that the EU promoting its own agenda of equal rights at the expense of national interests without considering the specifics of national contexts. The anger expressed here is directed at the sense of hypocrisy. The idea that EU policies designed to promote equality for all ethnic groups might actually do so is dismissed as cosmetic; according to the interviewee, it is more important to the EU that the Czech Republic appears to conform than achieve real equality. This sort of sentiment is resonant of the objections to the Soviet influence during the communist period; like the Soviet Union, the EU is seen as an interfering supra-national body without any real political legitimacy in the nation. Although this was a minority view within the group interviewed, it is one that reverberates throughout Czech politics and society, most prominently expressed by the long-serving and vociferously Euro-sceptic former president Václav Klaus. ´Further views on EU accession and its impact are discussed in the next section, 7.3 which discusses the teacher interviews.

[205] "What are the challenges of modern Czech society? Not to be racist? School didn't prepare me for that, my family did".

7.3 Teacher interviews

Interviewing teachers who had worked through the post-1989 changes in Czech education provided insight as to how the new education policies were received by those on the frontline of education, delivering the reformed and newly decentralized curricula. It also revealed how the teachers who participated saw changes in society being reflected in the classroom. These interviews sought to provide supplementary information related to research questions 3 and 4, namely:

> **3. How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?**

Whilst this question is chiefly dealt with in the Key Document Analysis (Chapter 5), the fact that all of the teachers participating had experience of teaching after the Czech Republic's accession to the EU in 2004 meant that these interviews provided an opportunity to gauge the reception of policy changes amongst those expected to deliver them.

> **4. What are the potential implications on the development of identities of minority groups, particularly Roma, continuing to face segregation in schools and other structural barriers to education?**

Information relating to this research question was either raised in response to questions about participants' views on Czech society, or in more general conversations that developed while recording the interviews.

7.3.1 Differences Between National and Ethnic Identity

The teachers' responses to direct questions about their national and ethnic identity were broadly similar to those in the student group. Although the teachers were slightly more likely to express ambivalence towards their national identity as a somewhat accidental characteristic, there was generally a strong sense of identification with a regional or local identity, as well as a strong sense of connection to traditions, history, and national symbols.

One respondent provided a particularly clear example of this attitude. Speaking about the importance of her national identity stated: *"Nevím. Beru to jako danost. Každý se někde narodí"*[206] (Diana). Yet Diana also expressed a powerful connection to her regional identity: *"Jsem Moravanka. Morava je můj domov!"*[207] The same respondent also expresses regret at the break-up of Czechoslovakia: *"[Slovensko] dnes už bohužel není součástí republiky"*[208], as she has a *"vřelý vztah skrze lidovou píseň"*[209]. She attributed this partly to the promotion folk-culture had received from the communist state, where it was an "export item". This expression of a strong sense of connection to a collective identity that was separate from Czech identity (perhaps more closely aligned with Czechoslovak identity?), did not preclude the respondent from taking pride in such "national" figures as the composers Dvořák, Janáček and Martinů, or others such as Hus, Čapek and Komenský. This suggests a stronger affinity with the historical *idea* of the nation than the contemporary reality, implying that for her the two were no longer aligned. Another respondent, for whom Czechness was stated as an important part of her identity, had a particularly strong attachment to the region of Prague that she lives in, saying that, for her, Vršovice is the *"centrum světa!"*[210] (Janina). However, in this case there was no tension between a strong national and a strong local identity, perhaps due to the status of Prague as the nation's capital. It may also indicate that there is not necessarily a conflict between a strong regional or local identity and identifying strongly with the nation, a suggestion that is supported by Baum and Friere, who argue that "regional identities might exist in harmony with a strong and stable national identity" (2003, p. 41). However, as Billig points out, regional claims can become separatist movements that have the potential to threaten nation-states (1995, p. 133). Other respondents identified with a wider ethnic group, such as European or Slav, with one describing herself as *"Evropanka s moravskými kořeny"*[211] (Jana). Jana saw "Czechness" as something incidental and not constituting an important part of her identity at all.

[206] "I don't know. I take it as fact. Everyone is born somewhere".
[207] "I am Moravian. Moravia is my home!".
[208] "It is unfortunate [that] today Slovakia is not part of the Republic".
[209] "warm relationship [to Slovakia] through folk-songs".
[210] "centre of the world!".
[211] "European with Moravian roots".

In total, three out of seven participants from the teacher group saw being Czech as an important element of their identity, two declared that it was somewhat important, and two that it was not important at all. Taken together, the responses imply that ethnic or regional identity is considered a more important element of personal identity than nationality for this group, but that this did not necessarily interfere with their identification as Czech. In general, they were less attached to their nationality than to their local or ethnic identity. The minor differences in responses between the teacher and student groups (a slightly higher proportion of student respondents stated that being Czech was an important part of their identity, and were less likely to express a strong local or regional identification) were very small, but do hint that the younger generation may have grown up with a more positive view of the Czech nation.

7.3.2 Czech Characteristics

Information regarding Czech characteristics was obtained from responses to questions about whether the Czech Republic was seen as having a common national goal, what united and divided Czechs, and whether they felt proud or ashamed of the Czech Republic in any way. The teacher group was far less opinionated about what it meant to be Czech, and only two of the respondents, Diana and Sabrina, attempted to characterize the nation. Nevertheless, themes emerged that revealed opinions about certain unifying features, namely: a deeply rooted distrust of the political classes, passiveness, a sense of humour, and an affinity for “low-brow” culture. These themes broadly coincide with those that arose from the student interviews, and with the findings of Holý’s study - those interviewed had a generally disparaging view of other Czechs, which did not necessarily conflict with their generally positive views of the Czech nation as a whole. As with the student interviews, the views of individual respondents are presented as quotations and then discussed in order to illustrate the various ideas about Czechness that emerged.

The power of beer and sport to unify Czechs was consistent throughout this group: *“Občany České republiky sjednocuje možná hokej a pivo!”*[212]

[212] "What unites citizens of the Czech Republic is likely beer and hockey”.

(Lenka), *"Sjednocuje pivo, deník* Blesk[213]*,* Aha[214]*, slevy v supermarketech … Snad ty starší sjednocuje láska k kořenům, na Moravě k folklóru"*[215] (Petra). The mention of beer-drinking as a popular unifying pastime hints at the *švejkovství* discussed in the student interviews, and whilst not necessarily presented as problematic in the first of these quotations, the association of it with tabloid reading and bargain-hunting in the second hints at a certain disdain for these activities. This is particularly interesting, as it suggests that the respondent is distancing herself from this culture, and from the type of materialism she appears to associate with it. The disparagement of the mass culture by authority figures such as teachers, who favor attachment to "roots" and "folklore", has the potential to create divisions in society, and perhaps especially in a country undergoing economic transformation. As Bourdieu notes, the potential for intergenerational conflict increases with the scale of the changes that take place in "the definitions of occupational positions or in the institutionalized means of access to them" (2010, p. 293). That the teacher here sees among younger people an increased affinity towards "unsophisticated" culture, is an example of such intergenerational disconnect.

The remark about "supermarket discounts" is also noteworthy, as it carries an implicit criticism of consumerist culture. This aspect of post-'89 Czech culture that is heavily satirized in the 2004 film *Český sen* (Czech Dream), in which two film students entice a large crowd to the "grand opening" of a fake hypermarket on the outskirts of Prague through a large marketing campaign, then filming their reactions. The film was critically acclaimed for highlighting the issue. Unlike the respondent, who contrasts those who engage with such culture with a Romantic notion of an older, less materialistic generation more in touch with their "roots", the film does not draw any comparisons with a better time, but simply points an accusing finger at the processes of marketing and globalisation. However, implicit in the film's title, *Český sen,* is the suggestion that this is what unites the modern Czech Republic. That well-educated people, such as the makers of this film and the interview respondents, share this perception of Czech society and, crucially, seek to distance themselves from it, has implications for the view of Czech

[213] A tabloid daily newspaper, broadly similar in content and reputation to *The Sun* in the UK.
[214] Another tabloid daily with a right-wing stance.
[215] "Beer, the tabloids *Blesk* and *Aha,* and supermarket discounts unite [Czechs] … But among older people it's more love for their roots, in Moravia it is folklore".

society that may be passed to school pupils, as it may not reflect their lived experience.

The most positive unifying characteristic that was identified by the teacher group as being a specifically "national" characteristic was the sense of humour:

> *"To pozitivní, co spadá také do české národní identity, je asi smysl pro humor … Je to ale humor, který je někdy tak český, že je mnohdy pro jiné národy nesrozumitelný nebo neuchopitelný. Některé filmy jako „Kolja", „Pelíšky", nebo „Vesničko má středisková"*[216] *a další, jsou myslím skutečně srozumitelný pro Čechy, alo pro Španěly nebo Američany budou asi divné nebo zvláštní, některým situacím a věcem pravděpodobně rozumět nebudou"*[217] (Sabrina).

The idea that a sense of humour is a unique national feature is perhaps "unique" to all nations (for example, typical British humour is thought to be portrayed in comedy as diverse as Mr Bean and The Office - they have little to nothing in common, on the face of it at least, but are both widely thought to embody A British Sense of Humor) and Medhurst proposes that humour may have a special role to play in the construction of national identity, as it

> *"is founded on 'the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries' [...], it works ceaselessly to draw lines of 'difference and exclusion' [...], and it allows those inside any given identity category to shore up their sense of self by enabling them to use laughter 'to leave out, to render "outside", abject' those perceived as occupying contrasting or challenging identities"* (2007, pp. 18–19).

Here, humour is seen as something that unites Czechs in a positive way, but the respondent also demonstrates an awareness of that this comes at a cost of possible exclusion of others. Whether this is seen as positive or negative aspect of a unique sense of humour is unclear. The choice of "Americans" and "Spaniards" as examples of people who would fail to understand is also

[216] Czech films from the 1980s and 1990s.

[217] "A sense of humour is also a positive feature of Czech national identity. But it's a humour that is sometimes so Czech as to be incomprehensible or baffling to others. Some films, such as "*Kolya*","*Cosy Dens*" or "*My Sweet Little Village*" and others are very understandable for Czechs, but for Spaniards of Americans they would be strange or weird, they would probably not understand some things".

telling. The special role of America and its special place in the "Czech dream" is explored in the film *"Pelíšky"* ("*Cosy dens*") (1999), in which a little boy dreams of cowboy boots and blue jeans for his Christmas; these are aspirational status symbols representing a glamorous, but unattainable Other. The second choice, Spaniards is also interesting; the Czech equivalent of the English "It's all Greek to me" is *"Je to pro mě španělská vesnice*"("For me it's a Spanish village"), signifying, as in English, an incomprehensible Otherness. The use of these comparisons positions Czech humour as something unique that allows Czechs to let go of aspirations to be like Americans, but also makes them impenetrable to those who are not culturally conversant enough to be part of the national in-group; the symbolic boundary has been drawn and is, by definition, exclusive.

In these interviews, a distrust of the political classes accompanied a desire to separate the idea of "Czechness" from the image of the nation portrayed by politicians. In all of the interviews, politics was identified as a source of division in Czech society, and a source of personal shame in three. For example: "*Stydím se za obraz, který světu o Česku poskytl Václav Klaus, stydím se za mnohé nenažrané zkorumpované politiky"*[218] (Diana); *"[Stydím se za] politiku, prezidenta, korupci – protože v této zemi žiji, a také se mě to týká"*[219] (Lenka).The first of these quotations shows concern at the image of the nation presented by the then president and demonstrates a desire to dissociate from that image (Klaus was known for his conservative opinions on a range of topics from climate change to homosexuality). This signals a perceived divide between the respondent and the political representatives, but also between the image of the nation they present and the one which the participants would like the world to have of the nation:

> *"To, co vnímám jako negativní rys, je nedostatek národní hrdosti. Češi na sebe někdy zcela nesmyslně plivou, jako by jim chyběl dostatek sebeúcty. A není zde přitom žádný skutečný důvod, proč by nám sebeúcta měla chybět … Mám tím na mysli neustálé lamentování typu 'My jsme hrozní, tady se krade, tady se tuneluje, tady všechno projde, to jinde by už museli odstoupit (politikové), tady je korupce, tady je*

[218] "I'm ashamed of the image of the Czech Republic that is provided by Vaclav Klaus, and I'm ashamed of the many greedy and corrupt politicians".
[219] "[I'm ashamed of] politics, the president, corruption – because I live here, and also it affects me".

byrokracie … tohle se může stát jenom u nás, to jinde ve světě není možné'…"[220] (Sabrina)

Here, Sabrina seems aggravated by the romanticising of an unspecified, imagined Other where there is no theft, corruption, or fraud. She recognises the futility of these comparisons, and sees them as unjustified, as these problems exist everywhere. This suggests a more pragmatic attitude to the country's problems, typical of what Boym says is "not a matter of romance, but of necessity", as East Central Europeans are confronted with the reality of "Western Europe" (2001, p. 246).

Overall, the teacher group gave a more negative impression of their fellow Czechs, compared to the student group. This raises questions about whether this might be put down to age, education, life experiences, or generational differences.

7.3.3 The Importance of History to Czech Identity

As in the student interviews, a question about the role of history in shaping national identity was included in the interview schedule. The teacher group universally agreed that it had a very big part to play. Those who expanded on this also showed general agreement about which historical figures and events that were most influential in contributing to the national character: invasions, occupations and national heroes. What distinguished this group from the students was a tendency for some respondents not only to see members of the nation as participating in a historical narrative, but to express a deeply felt connection as a result of "shared experiences". It is also interesting to note that those whose answers suggested that history played a role in creating a shared historical experience were all from the sub-group who said that their nationality was an important element of their identity.

[220] "What I perceive as a negative feature is a lack of national pride. The Czechs sometimes spit on themselves as if they lacked enough self-esteem. And there is no real reason why self-esteem should be lacking … I mean the constant lamentation of the type "we are terrible, here there is theft, here there is fraud, everything goes on here, elsewhere they (politicians) would have to resign, here is corruption, there is bureaucracy ... this can only happen to us, it is not possible elsewhere in the world ... ".

The sense of connection through shared experience was most strongly expressed by Helena:

> *"Historie má pro každý národ velmi důležitou roli, pro rozvoj jeho identity je nezbytná. V každé zemi lze najít symbolické odkazy na národní historii. Jsou to pomníky, památníky, sochy, muzea, mosty … ty vidíme na každém kroku … A co víc – ti druzí – ti stojící mimo naší, mimo náš národ, nám nerozumějí. Patříme k sobě"*[221].

Not only does she note the impact of history on the built environment, but also recognizes the role that these objects - "monuments, memorials, sculptures, museums, bridges" - have in constructing an image of the national past. However, being aware of the constructed (or even invented) nature of the nation's history through symbolism in public art and architecture, does not preclude the expression of a rather more primordial perspective in which those who are part of the nation "belong together". Those who are not seen as part of this community are firmly allocated to an out-group who "do not understand" the nation. This response is particularly interesting, as it shows that there need not be any inherent contradiction or dissonance between observing the construction of historical narrative and still feeling a deep, almost metaphysical connection to the nation and the past that justifies the exclusion of Others.

Events from Czech history identified previously as being of particular symbolic significance to Czech identity (see, for example: Mock, 2014; Heimann, 2009; Sayer, 1998; Demetz, 1997; Holý, 1996) were often raised as making a significant impact on the formation of Czech national identity – in particular, the symbolic defeats and periods of occupation:

> *"Můžeme se učit z chyb v historii (zejména okupace republiky v roce 1968, mnichovská zrada v roce 1938, nadvláda Habsburků a přičlenění k Rakousku v letech 1526-1918). Můžeme být ale také hrdí na historické úspěchy a stavět na nich hrdost a sounáležitost s národem i*

[221] "History has a very important role for every nation, the development of its identity is essential. In each country, symbolic references to national history can be found. These are monuments, memorials, sculptures, museums, bridges ... - we see every step … And what's more - those others - those standing outside our group, outside of our nation, do not understand us. We belong together …".

státem, například odpor proti okupaci v roce 1968, odpor proti komunistickému režimu atd." [222] (Helena).

In this case, Helena appears to attribute the development of positive national characteristics as a consequence of "mistakes" of history. The description of these events as "mistakes" is telling, as it suggests an element of culpability that is not always apparent in historical narratives – particularly when the speaker identifies with the "victim" group (Mock, 2014;Heimann, 2009; Gellner, 1983). However, there is also an assumption that the "experience" of these events will influence future behaviour – long after, in some cases, the event itself has passed out of living memory. Therefore, it seems that Helena is re-iterating a conventional narrative. This version of events holds symbolic significance and is assumed to influence the national character. Such assumptions about the role of history are interesting because, as Holý (1996) points out, the character traits supposed to be borne as a result of these experiences do not have to be observable in many, or indeed any, individual members of the nation to be attributable to the nation as a whole. The precise nature of presumed "national" characteristics was not clearly defined in response to this particular question.

On the whole the teacher group was less likely to use the past to explain the present than the student group. It is unclear whether this was because they assumed the links to be self-evident (e.g. that a distrust of politicians came about as a result of the Munich agreement[223]) or because the respondents themselves were unsure of the nature of the connection: *"Nepochybně národní totožnost ovlivnil Jan Hus, bezpochyby velký vliv habsburské monarchie, jejíž jsme byli součástí, v moderních dějinách Mnichov, druhá světová válka"*[224] (Diana). The significance of these disparate events spanning several centuries involving different actors, politics and forces being invoked to account for the national character is revealing. As has been

[222] "We can learn from mistakes in history (particularly the occupation of the Republic in 1968, the Munich betrayal in 1938, the rule of the Habsburgs and the annexation to Austria in the years 1526-1918 ...) But we can also be proud of the historical achievements and build on them pride and belonging to the nation and the state, such as resistance against occupation in 1968, resistance to the Communist regime, etc.".

[223] The agreement between the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy that permitted the annexation of the Sudentenland.

[224] "Undoubtedly, the national identity was influenced by Jan Hus, undoubtedly also by the great influence of the Habsburg monarchy, of which we were part. In modern history: Munich, World War II ...".

pointed out, they are famous defeats or "betrayals" inflicted upon the "Czech nation" by outsiders. The fact that these events are what came to mind suggests that this group generally accepts a narrative of historical victimhood and heroic dissidence. As the views expressed here are those of educators, they may therefore carry legitimacy through the pedagogical authority of the teacher's position (Bernstein, 2000). It seems reasonable to expect that even if this interpretation of the influence of historical events on the nation is not explicitly reproduced through curriculum content, challenging this established narrative may be difficult due to the necessary imbalance of power in a classroom situation. As a result, the established narrative may be unintentionally reproduced through teachers' capacity to endorse or dismiss divergent perspectives.

Another strand of the standard narrative of Czech history that was reiterated by the teacher respondents was the significance of symbolic national heroes either in representing or influencing the national character:

> *"V různých dobách se objevují různé výrazné osobnosti, a z těch si každý národ vybírá ty, které postaví jako své vzory. V českých dějinách jsou to sv. Václav, Karel IV, Jan Hus, Jan Žižka, Jan Ámos Komenský, T. G. Masaryk … Ti symbolizují také naše společné hodnoty, takže historie se vyznamně podílí na tvorbě národních hodnot"*[225] (Tereza).

These same names emerged in other interviews and other parts of the interview, particularly in response to the question about sources of national pride. Five out of seven members of the teacher group expressed a level of identification with these figures, citing them as a source of pride in the nation. Whilst this shows that these figures retain symbolic significance for the participants, it does not necessarily mean that all respondents ascribe the *same* symbolic significance to them. As Holý (1996) and Hutchins (2011) point out, the meaning attached to national heroic figures is malleable context dependent. Therefore, the "national values" referred to by Tereza, and are not necessarily universal. Nevertheless, the feeling expressed in this quotation is

[225] "At different times, different prominent personalities are emerging, and each of them chooses the ones they make as their models. In Czech history, they are St. Václav, Karel IV, Jan Hus, Jan Žižka, Jan Ámos Komenský, T.G.Masaryk ... They also symbolize our common values, so history plays a significant role in the creation of national values".

that the imagined community of the nation is bound by the values embodied by these figures.

Only one respondent seemed almost cynical about the role of official history in shaping national identities, stating that *"má velkou roli v určování národní totožnosti, ale musí být pravdivá"*[226] (Lenka). This points to an awareness of competing narratives, but also belief in an objectively true version of events. Hutchins (2011) points out that there are two major competing approaches to history taught in school – multi-cultural and conservative. A belief in a "true" vision of the nation, often based on the moral guidance and values of national heroic figures is more typical of the conservative approach, which is less conducive to promoting multicultural values. Hechter associates this directly with state-building nationalism, which is carried out by "promulgating an arbitrary set of cultural practices and beliefs, including some sanctioned story of the nation, as a standard to be adopted throughout the territory" (2000, p. 24). While it is arguable whether the events in Czech history that the participants saw as important are really "arbitrary", the idea that should be reproduced, transmitted, and then in some way internalised by citizens to create a shared sense of identity raises questions about what consequences there are for those whose historical narrative that runs counter to the "official" one.

On the whole, the teacher group expressed a fairly traditional view of the role of history in shaping national identity, citing symbolic defeats and national heroes as key to understanding it. Although only Tereza explicitly stated that those outside of the nation "do not understand" the nature of these supposed shared experiences, the overall attitude expressed by the teachers was that the national history shaped the national character. This has implications for those members of the nation (according to a civic conception of the nation) who are not seen as having "shared" these experiences, for example more recent migrants, as it suggests that they will be considered in some way outside of the national in-group, and considered Other in a way that would be difficult to overcome. This may be exacerbated in the case those whose racial difference is more visible, for example Roma or Vietnamese.

[226] "a big role … but it must be true".

7.3.4 Relations to Others

How significant national Others are perceived by teachers is important, as their attitudes may - intentionally or not - impact on how these groups are seen by the children they teach; their position of authority lends legitimacy to their positions, however obliquely implied they are. The themes that emerged in relation to the teacher group's attitude to both internal and external Others were fairly consistent throughout this group, but those that emerged differed markedly from the responses of the student group. Relations with the Roma population did not feature as a major theme, and attitudes toward external Others were typically negative.

Unlike the student respondents, the teacher group rarely singled out specific national or ethnic groups either for praise or censure. Only one respondent expressed a particular degree of fellowship with Slovaks, which was considered more closely linked to Moravia in terms of folk-culture. There is a degree of dissatisfaction expressed at the lack of congruence between the ethnic nation and the political, perhaps the major contributor toward nationalist feeling according to Gellner (1983, p. 1). However, what is striking here is that the perceived connection is not weakened by the lack of political unity. The same respondent also noted a negative attitude towards Germans among fellow Czechs, and attributes this to the legacy of WWII: *"Například můj soused byl velice rozpačitý nad volbou svého syna, který si vzal za manželku Němku. Ne kvůli tomu, že je cizinka, ale kvůli její německé příslušnosti"*[227](Diana). Although the respondent does not profess to owning any such prejudice herself, she does not find anything exceptional in her neighbour's attitude – on the contrary, she cites it an illustrative example of how anti-German feelings persist among some Czechs.

The above references to individual nationalities are isolated examples, and most of the teacher group avoided singling out other national or ethnic groups. However, the responses contained oblique references to a significant Other, with whom the relationship was complex. This was perhaps most

[227] "For example, my neighbour was very ashamed of the choice of his son, who married a German. Not because she is foreign, but because of her German nationality".

succinctly expressed by Sabrina who noted the inferiority complex of the Czech nation: *"Neustále se ale srovnáváme s jinými zeměmi a neustále jsme na tom hůře"*[228]. This was echoed by Diana, who, with regards to education felt that Czechs *"Nejdříve snaha dělat vše jako na Západě"*[229]. This reveals a sense of having to live up to the (imagined or imposed) standard of an ill-defined Other that was an underlying theme throughout the teacher interviews.

Given that Czech-Roma relations became a major theme in the student interviews, despite not being formally part of the interview schedule, it was surprising that this did not emerge as a theme at all in the teacher interviews. However, during the in-person interviews I had the opportunity to raise the issue as the conversation. One teacher (Tereza) simply said that she had never witnessed any issues. When I asked if any Roma children attended the school in which the interview was conducted, she answered no. This was unexpected, as the town (Chomutov) is known for having a significant Roma population. Janina, while not dismissive of the issue itself, appeared not to think it was particularly pertinent to the conversation. When I raised the issue, she shook her head, saying *"Ach, ta romská otázka …"*[230] as if the question was at once familiar and unwelcome, and I did not feel it wise to pursue the question and damage the rapport with the interviewee. The lack of willingness to raise or answer "the Roma question" contrasts starkly with the student group, who were very willing to discuss the issue – whether they saw the Roma themselves as the issue, or attitudes towards them. That the education professionals who participated in this study seem the least willing to address the issue or even acknowledge it, suggests that Roma pupils might face a significant barrier of institutional and cultural invisibility in schools.

7.3.5 Changes in Education

This section discusses how teachers perceived changes that have taken place in education since 1989. These changes fell into three distinct, but related categories, which are discussed in the following order: changes to the student (7.3.5.1) body, changes in society that impact on education (7.3.5.2), and

[228] "But we are constantly comparing with other countries, and we are always worse off".
[229] "First of all, try to do everything like it's done in the West".
[230] "Ah, that Roma question …".

structural changes to the education system (7.3.5.3). On the whole, teachers felt that children have become less biddable but more confident. Some felt that this was a positive development, while others were more ambivalent. Most agreed that the changes that have taken place in society have made their job more difficult, mainly through increased inequality. The teachers all felt that the structural changes that the education system has undergone has enabled them to be more creative in their pedagogy but has also increased their workload by increasing the number of administrative tasks they are required to undertake.

7.3.5.1 Changes to the Student Body

Changes to the student body was an issue frequently raised in response to questions about challenges facing Czech schools. The prevailing attitude was that children had become more difficult to manage in the classroom, but this negative perception was somewhat tempered by observations that pupils are more open and communicative than they were in the past.

Perceived decline in student behaviour is perhaps something of a cliché and is not unique to the Czech context. For example, the results of an Association of Teachers and Lecturers survey reported in the *Guardian* in 2011 showed that 56.5% of its members thought student behaviour had worsened in recent years (Vasagar, 2011). The oft cited quotation attributed to Socrates in response to this, that children are "tyrants" who "tyrannize their teachers" shows that such feelings are nothing new. However, it is a fairly accurate summary of the feelings of most of the teachers interviewed. What is interesting here is not the observation that children are less manageable and interested in learning than they once were, but rather the reasons attributed to this perceived change by the teachers, and their response to this apparent shift in student attitudes, for example: *"Studenti jsou na jednu stranu drzejší a hůře zvladatelní, ale na druhou stranu komunikativnější, otevřenejší"*[231] (Jana). The same respondent cited more pushy and assertive students as one of the main successes of Czech education since 1989, but states that she is

[231] "On the one hand, students are cheekier and less manageable, but on the other hand are more open and communicative".

unsure whether this is *"díky systému, nebo jemu navzdory"*[232]*.* That the teacher can express satisfaction at the fact that students are more assertive than in the past indicates a feeling that this quality may be a necessary, or at least desirable one, and that the inconvenience to teachers is an unfortunate side-effect. The uncertainty over whether this change is a result of changes in education indicates an awareness of other factors (for example social pressures, culture, and media) that children encounter that can influence their attitudes and behaviour in school. As Daun (2011) notes, whilst changes in education "are initially driven from the political area, but with the transfer of their implementation and funding to levels below the national level, other steering forces start to work". Therefore, it can be surmised that the perceived changes are the result of multi-directional forces rather than a direct consequence of changes in education policy.

The more challenging attitude of children was also implicitly linked to children having a greater sense of their own rights in the classroom:

> *"Dětí chtějí diskutovat, zda 2 plus 2 jsou čtyři nebo pět, a často se cítí omezování ve svých právech na vyjádření svého názoru"*[233] (Diana).

This respondent attributes this to changes in the curriculum since 1989, specifically decline in the teaching of factual content in favor of skills-based education, as today's school *"vede děti k obhajování názorů, nikoli k elementárním znalostem"*[234](Diana)*.* Contained in this interpretation is the notion that not only does reducing the factual content in schools lead to more argumentative (or rather less subordinate) students, but that this is a negative consequence of the changes in education since 1989.

Across the interviews, a recurring motif was that the nature of students, their access to technology, and their capacity for self-expression and critical thinking presents challenges for their teachers. What differed was the teachers' attitudes towards this change, with some feeling that this is a necessary or even positive step, and others expressing rather reproachful resignation. However, this phenomenon is not unique to the Czech Republic and may merely reflect a tendency of the older generation, like Socrates, to

[232] "Thanks to the system or in spite of it".
[233] "Children want to discuss whether 2+2 = 4 or 5, and often have the feeling that their right to express themselves is being limited [if they are told they cannot]".
[234] "Leads children to defend their opinions, not towards elementary knowledge".

denigrate the youth. That both teachers and the public tend to consider that standards of behaviour are in decline might prove to have more serious consequences, as it may have implications for the inclusion of pupils from Roma and other ethnic minority groups. Pressure to enforce strict discipline standards has been shown to disproportionately disadvantage pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds in schools in the United States (Bal, 2016). As those already part of the established majority are likely to be involved in setting and enforcing "standards", such standards may be influenced by significant cultural bias that could prove difficult for those outside of the dominant culture to understand or adhere to.

7.3.5.2 Changes in Society Impacting the Role and Work of Teachers

The most common negative consequence of changes post-1989, according to the teachers interviewed, was that the administrative workload of teachers had increased substantially. Again, this is a complaint echoed among teachers in the UK - that the workload and paper trails are constantly increasing, leaving teachers with less time for working directly with children. All of the teachers interviewed raised this as an issue that had impacted on them. There was also a sense that the prestige and authority of teachers had diminished in the same period, whilst schools and teachers take on more of the work of parents.

On being asked about the changes in education since 1989, one teacher remarked that *"Ano, odvádějí mě od přímé práce s dětmi. Narostla administrativa*"[235](Lenka). This increased administration was frequently attributed to the impact of the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] and was viewed negatively by all of the teacher group.

The teachers interviewed also felt that they were having to compensate for children not learning fundamental skills at home, therefore this responsibility was shifted to them. *"Na dětech je znát, že byl přesunut akcent z odpovědnosti rodiny na zodpovědnost školy … Z dlouholeté praxe s dětmi*

[235] "Yes [the changes] take me away from working directly with children. The administration has increased".

předpokládám přiměřené znalosti a dovednosti, ale dnešní dětí je nemají"[236] (Janina). This teacher was particularly concerned at the decline in standard of reading saying that, *"V současnosti neumějí plynule číst většinou do devíti, desíti let"*[237]*.* Again, this is a concern that has been raised in other countries; in the UK, similar concerns have been raised and made headlines (Ahmed, 2017). The link between poor literacy attainment has been linked to unemployment and poverty, and even lower life expectancy (Gilbert, et al., 2018). It was reported that in 2013 "a quarter of all children left primary education without reading well each year, rising to two in five poorer children" (National Literacy Trust: Read On Get On, 2014). However, the teachers interviewed did not attempt to explain the lack of skills in terms of social or economic status of the children explicitly, rather attributing it to changes in society since 1989. The predominant feeling was that society was increasingly *divided* by economic status, with Tereza describing it as *"atomizovaná"* (*"*atomised") and less cohesive as a result. Another observed that social inequality had increased among children. The consequences of this for schools, it was widely felt, was that home-school relationships had altered as a result, and that teachers were presented with increased challenges.

During the interviews, several teachers raised the changed nature of relationships with parents as a negative consequence of reforms post-1989. Once again, this is a change that teachers in the UK have also noted, which raises questions over whether this altered dynamic is the result of top-down changes to the school system, or rather the result of other forces acting on teachers' and parents' expectations of the role of schools and teachers. What was less clear was exactly what teachers believed their role to be in relation to providing a service – there was a sense that more was expected from them in terms of doing "parenting" type of work, but no clear explanation of how this differed from their role in the past from any of the respondents. This lack of definition and boundaries seems to be associated with increasing marketisation in education by the respondents, where education was increasingly seen as a "service". Sabrina cites *"tlak ze strany rodičů. Kteří*

[236] "It is clear to children that the thrust of family responsibility has been shifted to the responsibility of the school ... I have long-term experience with children and I expect adequate knowledge and skills, but today's children do not have these".
[237] "Nowadays, most of them cannot read fluently until they are nine or ten".

začali školu chápat jako 'službu' a chtějí práci školy ovlivňovat či přímo řídit"[238]. The teachers tended to equate increased pressure from parents with the diminished *"prestiž učitelského povolání*"[239] (Lenka) alongside the *"snížení autority učitele"*[240] (Jana). One possible explanation for this perception among teachers is the advent of email and social media, which has made teachers more accessible to parents who wish to question (or even challenge) the content and form of their children's education. It also means that complaints about a teacher's performance can be made public, even without the teachers being aware of it, potentially adding to teachers' stress (Ratcliffe, 2017). All of these factors combine to leave teachers feeling that their professionalism is undervalued, and their authority is undermined.

Among the potential consequences of increased parental demands upon teachers and involvement in their children's education is the potential to reinforce existing inequalities. Research into parental involvement in schools suggests a correlation between increased affluence and closer parental involvement (de Carvalho, 2001). If this trend can be applied to the Czech context, then it is quite possible that Roma families, who are typically of lower-than-average socio-economic status, and less engaged with the formal education system in general (Miskovic, 2013), might be "pushed out" by more demanding families who are more likely to demand that the needs of their children are met according to their standards.

7.3.5.3 Structural and Pedagogical Changes in Education

The changes in education discussed by teachers related to both structural and pedagogical issues, with one area of overlap, which related to the increased range of resources that teachers had access to. Overall, the structural changes were evaluated negatively, whilst the changes in teaching style were mostly viewed positively by this group. The changes described by the Czech teachers are similar to the changes that have taken place in education elsewhere in Western Europe and the United States, with a move away from

[238] "Pressure from parents who started to understand school as a "service" and want to influence or directly manage the work of the school".
[239] "Prestige of the teaching profession".
[240] "Erosion of teacher authority".

traditional input-based, teacher-focused "chalk and talk" lessons to a more interactive or student-centred approach:

> *"Úspěchem je to, že většína škol přešla od tradičního, 'frontálního' vyučování k novým, modernějším, interaktivním metodám výuky … mnohem větší zapojení žáků do aktivní výuky, jejích větší podíl na výuce, jejich větší volnost, možnost otevřenosti a tolerance, jejich možnost se zapojit do řízení chodu škol, jejich vyjádření se k fungování škol (žákovské parlamenty a jiné samosprávné organizace žáků)"*[241] (Tereza).

This view was supported by other teachers, who echoed the view that children benefit from having greater autonomy in their learning: *"Když se podaří využit jejich předností, učí se mnohem lépe"*[242] (Jana). This view has become a dominant trend in European education (Sin, 2014), influenced by Montessori teaching methods and Carl Rogers's dictum that "the only learning which significantly influences behaviour and education is self-discovered" and that "significant learning is acquired through doing" (Rogers, 1969, p. 162). In the student-centred classroom, the teacher takes on the role of facilitator rather than instructor, and students are encouraged to learn through enquiry. Although research has shown this approach to be effective in promoting student learning, it has also been noted that when this approach has been promoted in transnational contexts, some teachers have been uncomfortable with the shift in the power balance between themselves and their students even when they have found the approach generally helpful (Jordan, et al., 2014). This may be a factor in considering the reasons that teachers perceived a general decline in their authority in recent years, so it is interesting that this shift in pedagogical approach was so positively viewed. Despite resistance to kowtowing to the West, and pressure to *"dělat všechno jako na Západě"*[243] (Diana), it was acknowledged by one of the teachers that this positive change had been, at least in part, down to *"Tlak EU na změny ve formách a metodách*

[241] "A success is that most schools have switched from traditional 'teaching from the front' to new, more modern methods … there is much greater involvement from students in active education, their greater role in teaching, their greater freedom, the possibility of openness and tolerance, their ability to participate in school management, their expression on the functioning of schools (student parliaments and other self-governing student organisations)".
[242] When they are able to make use of their own preferences, they learn much better".
[243] "Do everything like in the West".

výuky, na maximální využívání moderních technologií"[244] (Tereza), suggesting an awareness of the positive influence of EU membership, something that was resented elsewhere in the interviews. Teachers were also grateful for the increased access to resources, as well as the fact that they were more able than previously to access a wide range of resources: *"Rozmanitější způsoby výuky … lepší vybavení škol … Mám větší možnosti při výuce – přístupy, technika, knihy, učebnice"*[245] (Jana). All of the teachers interviewed viewed this as a positive change that had taken place in Czech education since 1989, resulting from freedom from a *"jednotné ideologie a jednotně ideologicky nastavených učebnic"*[246](Sabrina).

However, not all of the changes, even those related to increasing teacher and school autonomy, were viewed positively. Besides being able to access and choose from a wider range of resources and methods in the post-'89 period, later on individual schools were granted the freedom to set their own individual curriculum or *Školní vzdělávací program* [ŠVP] as planned in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]. Some teachers interviewed saw this as detrimental, as expressed by Lenka: *"Zrušení jednotných osnov považuji za osudovou chybu a lituji děti, které se musí často stěhovat"*[247]*.* This was seen as potentially damaging not only for the individual students who might be affected if they did have to change schools frequently, but also bad for maintaining uniform standards across the country:

> *"Školy si tvoří samy tzv. školní vzdělávací program, podle kterého vyučují. Neplatí již tzv. jednotné osnovy učiva, podle kterých školy učily úplně stejně. Například, každý rok v listopadu si mohly kdysi všechny školy porovnat, co zrovna v kterém předmětu probírají a zda jsou tedy stejně jako ostatní školy, nebo mají zpoždění"*[248](Tereza).

[244] "EU pressure to change forms and methods of teaching, to maximize the use of modern technologies".
[245] "More varied teaching methods … better equipped schools … I have more opportunities in teaching – approaches, technology, books, textbooks".
[246] "Unified ideology and uniformly set-up textbooks".
[247] "I consider the abolition of uniform curricula a fateful mistake and feel sorry for children who have to move often".
[248] "Schools form the so-called school educational program themselves, according to which they teach. They no longer apply the so-called unified curriculum lessons, according to which schools taught the same way. E.g. every year in November, all schools could have compared what they were discussing in the subject and whether they were like other schools or were late".

Here it can be seen that the benefits of increased freedom are somewhat tempered by concern that schools can move on at different paces, and there is a lack of an objective standard against which to measure progress.

Other structural changes that caused concern were the closure of "special schools" and the re-introduction of the multi-year gymnasium – both changes that could lead to a significant change in the intake of normal elementary schools by simultaneously increasing the number of pupils requiring additional support, and by moving the brightest students on to the multi-year grammar schools (*gymnázia*) at an earlier age. The head-teacher in this group was particularly concerned about the latter:

> *"Byla obnovena nižší gymnázia … čímž opět II. stupeň základní školy přichází o velký počet žáků, navíc těch nejlepších, kteří jdou do gymnázia. U nás ve škole odjede po 5. ročniku třeba z 15 děti 5 na nižší gymnázium, což je celá třetina!"*[249] (Helena)

This perceived "poaching" of the brightest students has the potential to lower the prestige of the ordinary elementary schools. Having this option open has the potential to contribute to, or entrench, educational inequality (Straková, 2010).

The same teacher was also concerned about the reduction in the number of "special schools": *"Velmi špatná změna je zrušení či reorganizace speciálního školství, výborně fungující systém byl zcela rozbit"*[250] (Helena) Again, this concern echoes those raised in other national contexts – inclusive education has become "part of a global agenda" but has proven difficult to achieve in practice (Wright, 2009). For example, the Education Scotland Act (2004) introduced a "presumption of mainstreaming" of all pupils in Scottish schools, but the challenges of implementation have led to press reports of it contributing to lack of classroom discipline and even once vocal proponents of the policy questioning its appropriateness (Allan, 2008). These combined structural changes may account for the changes in the student body discussed earlier, as well as putting increased pressure on teachers. If the changes are

[249] "The multi-year gymnázia were brought back … and a large part of their intake comes from the elementary school pupils, what's more the best ones … in our school after 5th grade, out of 15 children, 5 moved to the multi-year gymnasium, which is a third!" (Helena).
[250] "A very bad change is the abolition or reorganization of special education, the well-functioning system was completely broken" (Helena).

also perceived to be the result of pressure from the EU or “to do everything like they do in the West” (even if it is failing), then a certain amount of resistance to change is to be expected.

7.4 Summary

The student interviews showed some variation in how strongly the participants considered their nationality an important part of their identity. Those who identified most strongly with their nationality also felt that knowing the history of the nation was an important part of belonging to it. The historical education the students received during the transformation period followed a linear, chronological approach with a strong focus on names, dates, and figures of symbolic importance to the nation that is associated with nation-building aims (Hechter, 2004, p. 24). All of the students interviewed felt that they had received a thorough grounding in the history of the Czech Republic, and the majority felt that this helped foster their sense of belonging to the nation. It was also felt that they had a good overview of (Western) European history, and that they felt that Czech history was a part of a wider, Western European historical narrative. Discussions of Russia and communism were notable by their absence. It seems that in the rush to re-orientate the country towards Western Europe, the communist period and the Czech Republic’s Eastern neighbours were subject to a measure of “enforced forgetting”. Although the education experienced by all participants had international elements, the limited extent of this effectively distanced the nation from non-Western Others, as Western European languages and cultures became associated with potential economic benefits (Mitter, 1993).

Whilst citizenship education might be expected to be a forum for promoting multicultural values (Race, 2014, pp. 217-221), the delivery of this subject to the students interviewed meant that this was unlikely. From what students reported of the content, there do not seem to have been clear objectives in place, and it often focused on the symbols and institutions of the nation and the family, implying a symbolic equivalence between them. However, its effectiveness in promoting any agenda, either multi-cultural or national, seems to have been limited by how dull the subject was for students. None of those interviewed seem to have suffered any great social

disadvantage from receiving inadequate citizenship education (apart from several hours of boredom as teenagers!). However, the inadequate provision of citizenship education could have more serious consequences for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have access to such information at home. When a subject is weakly framed in this way, there is far more room for attitudes and norms already prevalent in society to be reproduced, especially when teacher attitudes legitimise these (Berstein, 2000). This is particularly pertinent in the case of discrimination against Roma, which is already institutionally sanctioned through *de facto* segregation.

The teachers' responses showed that even amongst those who did not feel that being Czech was an important part of their personal identity, they still felt a sense of connection to the nation, mainly through a sense of shared history. The feeling that members of a community are bound by events that took place long ago potentially excludes newcomers and Others who cannot (or do not want to) share in that aspect of belonging. This raises a concern that an exclusionary view of belonging to the nation may, consciously or not, be transmitted to students. The attitudes towards changes in education echoed those felt by teachers in other parts of Europe, for example concerns about the impact of technology, but these feelings were at times tinged with resentment that some changes, especially those designed to combat inequality (such as the closure of many "special schools") were an imposition and the result of Western influence. Combined with the teachers' lack of concern regarding issues of inequality with respect to the Roma community, this has potentially serious implications for inclusion and diversity in the Czech Republic (Jarkovská, et al., 2015; Miskovic, 2013). If those at the frontline of delivering policy changes are not fully invested in them, as appears to be the case among the participants, this represents a major obstacle in their implementation. Such attitudes may contribute to the fact that, over a decade after the discrimination case D. H. and Others was brought to the European Court of Human Rights, segregation and discrimination persist in classrooms throughout the Czech Republic (Jarkovská, et al., 2015; Amnesty International, 2015; Amnesty International, 2010; European Roma Rights Centre, 1999). Not all change was viewed negatively, however, and participants spoke positively about the fact that reduced central control over education had improved their access to resources and allowed them to explore new styles of teaching, showing that where benefits are perceptible to

practitioners, change can be welcome. The implications of the contributions of participants, in both the teacher and student groups, in relation to the research questions are discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 8.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this thesis was to explore ideas about Czech national identity, and the extent to which these influenced, and had been influenced by, education policy and practice since 1989. The purpose of this was to investigate whether a rigid conception of Czech identity was being transmitted, and whether the ideas about "Czechness" promoted in schools were exclusive and likely to impede a multicultural view of the nation. In order to do so, an interdisciplinary approach was adopted, and a range of data collection methods used to provide a multi-dimensional view of the interactions between policy making institutions, schools, teachers, and pupils. The data gathered was interpreted through the subjective lens of the researcher's perspective, which has been informed not only by the literature reviewed, but over ten years of professional practice in the field of education.

The study sought to address four main research questions:

1. **In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?**

2. **How have peoples' experiences of the Czech education system impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens?**

3. **How has prospective and actual EU membership impacted on the Czech education system?**

4. **What are the potential implications on the development of identities of minority groups, particularly Roma, continuing to face segregation in schools and other structural barriers to education?**

In answering these questions, the study examined the extent to which the Czech school system has acted as an instrument of nation-building, seeking to explore the ways that the school system impacts on the development of personal and collective identities. By using qualitative data, the study was able to build up a picture of how policy and practice interact with historical and cultural influences to affect how individuals see themselves and their place in the "nation".

The study was founded on the assumption, based on the ideas posited by Bordieu (2010) and developed by Bernstein (2000), that schools have a particularly important role to play in reproducing the social hierarchies that exist in societies by establishing a repertoire of cultural knowledge required for acceptance, and disproportionately rewarding those who have the readiest access to that knowledge – the elites and middle classes (Bordieu, 2010. p. 23), and those of the majority ethnic population. However, the study also acknowledged that education does not operate in a vacuum, and is influenced by myriad other factors, such as politics, media, and literature. By describing some of the processes involved in these interactions and ascertaining the extent to which people identified with established bodies of historical and cultural knowledge in contemporary Czech society, this study looked at how education can contribute to an individual's identification with the national in-group.

Following a discussion of different perspectives on the concept of nationalism and how nationalistic discourses have been utilised at various points in Czech history, the development of Czech education was traced and related to these discourses. The methodologies used to collect the various form of data used in this study were described, and their usage explained, in Chapter 4. Each data source is then analysed and discussed in turn, beginning with the key policy documents in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 the textbooks for the study of history and citizenship for grades 6-9 (for children aged 11-15) were analysed. This was followed by discussion of student and teacher interviews in Chapter 7. Following a discussion of the limitations of the empirical part of the study, the findings of these data will be placed in the context of the literature reviewed and related to the research questions. In this chapter, the study's implications for future policy and practice are discussed and recommendations made for future research, followed by a final reflection on the research process.

8.1 Limitations of the Study

As this study was qualitative in nature, the findings are not necessarily generalisable to the wider population, but rather reflect the individual views

and experiences of those who participated. Nevertheless, it provided a valid and reflective account of how experiences of the Czech education impacted on the formation of the participants' views of the Czech nation and their place in it. That said there were several confounding factors that limited the scope of the research.

The first of these factors concerned sampling, which was highly selective and limited in terms of numbers. Many of the student participants were known personally to the researcher, which meant that they were mainly of a similar age and level of education. Additionally, there were no participants from any ethnic or cultural minority groups. However, given that the study aimed to gather information about individual and not general experiences of the Czech education system, this was not considered to be a major obstacle to the validity of the study.

The second confounding factor involved the collection of data; three different methods were used – face-to-face interviews, online interviews and email exchanges. This was determined partly by the participants' personal preference, and partly by practical considerations that made arranging in-person interviews difficult. It was decided that using a range of methods for data collection was, on balance, preferable to collecting a far more restricted amount of data. To ensure transparency, the individual methods of data collection were given in Chapter 4, along with basic demographic information about the participants.

Another significant confounding factor was the difficulty in gathering data related to a specific time period. The initial intention had been to source policy documents, interview subjects, and textbooks from the same period and triangulate the data, but this proved difficult to co-ordinate precisely. This was because the students interviewed did not all attend school at the same time, and several of them had finished their compulsory education before the publication of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]. The 8 teachers interviewed had mostly been teaching throughout the 1990s, and many of them had begun their careers during the communist period. The textbooks analysed were in use after the student participants had finished their compulsory education – it was not possible to find a complete series of textbooks from an earlier period. The result is that the study provides an overlapping picture of the interactions

between policy, pedagogy, experience of schooling, and perceptions of national identity, rather than a detailed snapshot of a particular moment in time. Whilst this was initially disappointing, the fact that the data gathered relates to a wide span of time provides insight into how changes to education were perceived as they were implemented, rather than how they were intended. The study might have been complemented by the ability to interview children who were studying the textbooks analysed. This would have enabled the study to gauge the impact of the textbooks on the intended consumers and assess how they were being used in classrooms. However, the difficulties involved with obtaining ethical approval to work with children was considered to be too time-consuming, given the scale of the project.

The small-scale nature of the research as a doctoral project and financial constraints were the primary source of each of these confounding factors, but there were also several factors that were not considered that may have impacted on participants' national identities that were not explored during the data collection process, for example: gender, socio-economic status, and political beliefs. However, it was felt that attempting to gather information about each of these factors may have alienated some potential participants and including this data would have introduced excessive difficulties in interpreting the data.

These factors, although they limit the usefulness of the findings to produce a generalisable theory of the interaction between experiences of Czech education since 1989, do not negate the internal validity of the study which arises from the verifiable nature of the data collected and a reflexive approach to its interpretation. What is provided in the next section is an interpretation of the data in relation to each of the research questions.

8.2 Findings in Context

Research Question 1: In what ways, and to what extent, have concepts of nationality and nation building impacted on the formulation and delivery of education policy?

The literature reviewed in relation to the Czech education system suggested that the removal of communist ideology from the curriculum was not, at least at the level of policy, replaced by an overtly nationalistic agenda during the 1990s (Greger, 2011; Polzoi and Černá, 2003; OECD, 1996; Bîrzea, 1994;

Phillips and Kasser, 1992). However, the Czech Republic was not exempt from the increase in nationalist sentiments that characterised the transformation period in many of the post-communist states (Cakl and Wollman, 2005). It is unclear how this related to people's experiences of education, due to the paucity of in-depth information about education during that period, although the reinstatement of the multi-year gymnázia does seem to suggest that ideas from the First Republic were influential.

When the Czech Republic began to develop a coherent national strategy for education, it was with the prospect of EU membership in mind. The White Paper cautiously advocated a multicultural approach to education, whilst also stressing that the national history and traditions should be preserved as part of the function of the national education system (MŠMT, 2001). This broadly agrees with what the modernist and ethno-symbolist theories of nationalism tend to argue, i.e. that mass education and nation formation do have a special relationship, and that mass education has a key role to play in nation-building (or state-building) projects (Green, 2013; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012; Smith, 2009 Gellner, 1983). Although education reforms can be slow to take effect, the findings of this study appear to support the idea that for the Czech Republic there has been a deliberate process in which schools are tasked with passing on information about the nation's history and traditions, especially through the medium of history and citizenship education, which students have to compulsorily attend for three hours per week between the ages of eleven and fifteen. However, it did not find any overtly nationalistic or chauvinistic tendencies within either of the policy documents analysed, nor in the textbooks.

Analysis of the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] and *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] revealed an attempt to balance what could potentially be contradictory aims: promoting a strong sense of identity through conveying knowledge of the nation's history and culture, and the promotion of a multicultural society. Rather than address this knotty issue in detail, the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] set out the aims, but leaves their execution to individual schools in their own ŠVP (School Education Programme). On the one hand, this "light touch" approach at the policy level is in keeping with the de-politicisation of education that took place in the early transformation period and allows schools to develop curricula that suit the needs of their local

community. On the other hand, as “state policies control performance achievement in different ethnic groups” (Race, 2014), it could be seen as an abdication of responsibility at policy level to effectively advance the idea of a multicultural society.

Although the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] set out the aim of ensuring an individualised approach to education for all pupils, and promoting heterogeneity within classrooms, it failed to address the structural issues that allowed discrimination against Roma pupils that had existed under the communist system to persist and even proliferate. It seems very likely from this study that this is exacerbated through the relative invisibility of minority groups within the pedagogical materials, in which references to non-Western cultures and historical minorities are reduced to brief mentions, and the role of ethnic minorities in the national history is minimised. The overall effect of this is to subtly convey the message that the nation is composed of ethnic Czechs and contribute to the Othering of ethnic minorities.

The comparatively weak classification and framing of history and citizenship education under the umbrella of “Man and his World” means that although the content is not centrally dictated (except through the approval of textbooks), the ways in which the curriculum is delivered and assessed is more likely to favour those who already possess cultural capital from home. This is because weaker classification and framing of subjects means that the desired outcomes and criteria for success are often oblique and difficult to discern for those not already well versed in the mores of the dominant culture, thereby disadvantaging newcomers or those from different cultural backgrounds. In this way, the education policies allow for dominant cultural narratives to retain their position by filling the “spaces between” (Bernstein, 2000) what is set out in the policy documents and approved textbooks.

The eight textbooks analysed in this study are broadly supportive of furthering an ideal of a tolerant and multicultural Czech Republic, and although they are not entirely unproblematic they attempt to promote understanding of certain Others by using combinations of images and direct questions, to encourage students to draw parallels between historical events and current affairs. They also refrain from the explicit denigration of any groups of Others. However, by accident or intent, they also on occasion reinforce unhelpful

stereotypes through the juxtaposition of text and image. They also provide opportunities for the continuation of national mythologies by prioritising established elements of the nation's historical narrative traditionally of symbolic importance (such as Jan Hus and the Battle of White Mountain), and minimising the space devoted to uncomfortable parts of the nation's history, such as Czech-German relations following WWII. The impact of these combined factors is that, although the content of these textbooks does not seem to be overtly influenced by exclusionary or nationalistic ideologies, they may at times support such views in cases where teachers or pupils already hold them. This means that teachers in particular need to be conscious of their own perspectives and reflect how these might influence their delivery of the material.

This capacity for filling the "spaces between" in instances where framing and classification are weak, places teachers in a powerful position as they negotiate, interpret, and prioritise what to teach pupils based on the direction of policy and the presentation of material in textbooks. Therefore, their personal opinions about citizenship and belonging must be taken into consideration. The eight teacher participants in this study all shared the belief that knowledge of the national history was fundamental to national identity, and they broadly agreed on what symbolic events and figures are most important. Many of them also expressed the idea that members of the nation were in some sense connected by this "shared history" from which they derived personal values, even if, in keeping with Holý's (1996) findings, they did not see these values embodied in the general population that they had contact with. How this belief might impact on the delivery of content to pupils must remain a matter of speculation without the opportunity for participant observation to investigate precisely how teachers approach the delivery of the curriculum, but it seems to strongly suggest that there is an established narrative of the past that the teachers interviewed are implicitly expected to pass on, and their apparent attachment to it makes it likely that they would attempt to do so. That knowledge of the "official" line of Czech history, as well as geography are considered essential for all citizens of the Czech nation, even those attending alternative, private, or international schools supports this, however there is no apparent official sanction for challenging received narratives. Whilst discussion and critical thinking were generally encouraged,

the perception that children are less receptive to learning facts than previous generations that several teachers expressed, suggested that challenges to established narratives or teachers' views might not always be welcome in the classroom.

Establishing the ways in which ideas about nationalism and nation-building impacted on the formulation of the first formal education policies in the Czech Republic following transformation is difficult from the policy documents alone. Although the multicultural aims of the White Paper minimised the importance of the nation-building function of education in the Czech Republic at policy level, ostensibly promoting a civic view of nationalism, the reforms introduced by the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] and the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* [RVP] did not attempt to redress the existing inequalities that the system inherited, and that have been well documented (Roma Education Fund, 2011; Amnesty International, 2010; Edumigrom, 2008; Čaněk, 2001; European Roma Rights Centre, 1999). On the other hand, it is important not to underestimate the importance of a policy document that promoted, however cautiously, multicultural values such as respect for, and openness to, other cultures in education. This sent an important symbolic message about the type of nation the Czech Republic *aspired* to be at the time of the document's publication in 2001. This appeared to represent a decisive move in the nation's re-orientation to the West – embracing (Western) European values and modes of education. The type of nation under construction seemed to be beyond accusation of any chauvinistic "blood and soil" nationalism, or even of susceptibility to the mythological narrative of the "Great Czech Nation". However, the cautious wording of the document and redistribution of power away from the centre to individual schools enabled the cultural, structural, and attitudinal barriers that prevented the realisation of these aspirations to remain intact, impacting on the delivery of the policies through textbooks and by teachers. This meant that that many schools remained fairly homogeneous and did not necessarily reflect the diversity of society, meaning that the delivery of the new education policy that promoted an open, civic view of the nation did not always meet these aspirations.

Research Question 2: How have peoples' experiences of the Czech education system impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens?

The student interviews undertaken showed the different ways young people defined "Czechness" and saw this as part of their identity, as well as how they saw their experiences of education, especially history and citizenship, influencing this. Modernist theorists on nationalism and nation-building have argued for the importance of schools in the transmission of patriotic values and the development of loyalty to the nation (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012; Billig, 1995; Gellner, 1983). According to this conception, systems of mass education construct a favourable, often heroic, image of the nation and inculcate a sense of loyalty and belonging to that image, which is reproduced in successive generations, with modifications as politically necessary. In the context of the Czech Republic, this raises the question that if the education system, and especially the history and citizenship curricula, have a special role to play in reproducing national identity, in the ideological vacuum that followed the fall of communism, exactly what was it reproducing? As discussed in Chapter 3, a communist education did not preclude the promotion of a positive image of the nation. It is possible that schools simply retained elements of the curriculum under communism that were not overtly ideological until new guidelines emerged. However, no data gathered, or literature reviewed in this study was able to confirm that this was the case, and further research would be necessary to discern whether this process actually took place. However, the student interviews implied a remarkable extent of agreement about the image of the nation that was taught to them in schools, suggesting that the symbolic idea of the "nation" remained constant while the political and economic orientation of the nation shifted.

The student participants' views of themselves as Czech citizens varied widely, with some considering "Czechness" as a key element of their identity, and others identifying more strongly with either a wider European or Slavic identity or a regional Moravian identity. However, there was a remarkable amount of agreement among participants about the key components of Czech identity – in particular, the love of beer and a quiet, domestic life. What was particularly striking was their shared knowledge of historical figures and events

that authors such as Heimann (2009), Holý (1996), Mock (2014), and Sayer (1998) have identified as having particular significance for Czech identity, such as the Hussite movement, the Battle of White Mountain, and the National Revival. Most of the participants felt that knowledge of these events formed part of the national culture, and that knowledge of this history from school helped them to understand their own place in it.

Despite the apparent emphasis on national history in their education, the student participants felt that they had received a broad education in history and geography that left them well-informed about other countries and cultures, although it was mostly focused on Western Europe and the USA. The students had, on the whole, a strong sense that the Czech Republic had a place in this history, which it was (perhaps surprisingly) much more closely affiliated with than the history of the Soviet Union, which was almost entirely absent from their schooling. This is possibly a reflection of the time in which the students attended compulsory education (after the fall of communism, but prior to the reforms outlined by the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper] taking effect). This period saw a rapid reorientation of the nation away from communism and towards the political, ideological, and economic models of Western Europe (Mitter, 1993). This was to some extent reflected in the education system, but in the absence of new policy guidelines, the changes were not implemented uniformly and were often influenced by the involvement of NGOs from Western Europe (Polzoi and Černá, 2003). Nevertheless, the educational experience of the student participants showed a remarkable degree of consistency, despite the wide geographical spread of participants' schools. Their education seems to have provided the participants with a view of themselves as Czechs and Europeans by situating Czech history in a European context, even among those who identified more strongly with a national, regional, or Slavic identity. Another of the ways that reorientation to the West was most apparent was in the provision of language education to students, who were generally offered a choice of English or German for their compulsory language study. These languages were seen as potentially conferring improved economic opportunities, and their prestige was legitimised by their replacement of the less prestigious Russian in schools (Gramling, 2014; Mitter, 1993).

In spite of a great deal of faith expressed by some in the capacity of citizenship education to inculcate values (Race, 2012; Eurydice, 2008), it does

not seem to have been a subject that was taken seriously by the student participants, with most finding it dull or pointless, and only a few saying that they enjoyed the discussion that it provoked. One respondent specifically credited their family over their education in providing them with inclusive values. There was also little uniformity in the content that the participants recalled, with some remembering an emphasis on family life, others learning mainly about political processes and institutions, and just a few discussing social issues. This suggests that there was far less agreement among educators about what it was important for citizenship education to impart during this time.

The findings of this study seem to support the idea that schools can support the reproduction of national identities, albeit in a limited way. There was remarkable congruity in pupils' experiences of history education, but wide diversity in the way they conceived of themselves as Czech citizens and the importance of their nationality to their personal identity. Overall, the education received by participants seems to have impacted on their views of themselves as Czech citizens, by providing knowledge of an established historical narrative that they felt a cultural affiliation to, but there are other factors that had an impact, too. From the interviews it was evident that the influence of family members was important. This suggests that the impact of school is important, but limited, and that the cultural norms and attitudes learned at home have a significant impact on how information transmitted at school is interpreted and internalised.

There are several interesting questions raised here that remain unanswered and would require further investigation. For example, what kind of effect the experience of living abroad had had on participants' sense of national identity and how they reflected on their educational experience compared to those participants who had never lived abroad? And what kind of influence did the participants' socio-economic background have on their education? These questions present an interesting starting point for future research.

The prospect of European Union membership clearly had a strong impact on the development of Czech education policy – the White Paper was drawn up with the explicit aim of preparing the country's education system for EU membership (MŠMT, 2001, p. 8). This study revealed some interesting consequences of changes that took place as a result of the proposals in the White Paper, particularly in relation to teachers' reactions to the changes, and how the country's re-orientation to the West was reflected in pedagogical, materials.

Preparing the education system for EU membership included a commitment to making education inclusive for pupils with disabilities and those from minority backgrounds (MŠMT, 2001, no pagination). Structurally, this was reflected in a reduction in the number of "special schools", but attitudinal barriers to a genuinely inclusive system remained in place. Among some of the teacher participants in this study, there was a sense that changes, especially those intended to promote inclusion, such as increasing the numbers of pupils in mainstream education, were being imposed according to a Western multicultural agenda that the Czech Republic had to "kow-tow" to. Although it is arguable that specific local contexts should be considered in the application of policy, other studies have shown that straightforwardly racist attitudes towards Roma persist even among education professionals (e.g. Jarkovská, et al., 2015; Amnesty International, 2010). At a time where Europe appears to be suffering something of a "backlash" against multiculturalism (Joppke, 2017; Race, 2012), these attitudes may be difficult to overcome. However, the negative perceptions of EU membership were tempered by acknowledgement that funding for education had increased since joining the EU. This was reflected in improved resources in schools, and teachers having the opportunity to adopt a more diverse range of methodologies in the classroom (moving away from the teacher-led instruction that had dominated in the past), something that was universally welcomed by participants.

The textbooks analysed, in particular the history textbooks, exemplified how the country sought to align itself away from its communist past and towards Western Europe through the selection of material that presented

Czech history as part of a wider, Western European narrative. The student interviews seem to attest to the success of this; many of the students interviewed, even those for whom being Czech constituted an important part of their identity, felt a close affinity with the history of Western Europe, and felt that it was "their" history. However, the textbooks analysed did not always successfully support the values of promoting diversity and multiculturalism as they purportedly set out to, as at times they still convey an image of the Czech nation as being predominantly white and ethnically Czech, which is somewhat at odds with the inclusive and civic values endorsed in the *Bílá kniha* [White Paper]. This demonstrates how the delivery of policies developed at national or supra-national level must be monitored carefully to assess their impact.

On the whole, it appears that EU membership provided an incentive for Czech education to move towards a more inclusive model than had been in place during the 1990s. However, the interviews revealed some resistance to - and even resentment towards – such change. The textbook analysis also revealed that some assumptions about the Czech "nation" (e.g. that it is white and speaks Czech as a mother-tongue) are implicitly conveyed through the ordering of materials and the marginal representations of Others.

Research Question 4: What are the potential implications on the development of identities of minority groups, particularly Roma, continuing to face segregation in schools and other structural barriers to education?

The issue of Roma segregation is widely discussed in the literature (see, for example: Jarkovská, et al., 2015; Amnesty International, 2010; EDUMIGROM, 2008; European Roma Rights Centre, 1999;), particularly since the case of *D.H. and Others* (2006) (in which a group of Roma pupils successfully challenged their placement in a "special school" at the European Court of Human Rights) drew international attention to the issue. Although there were no Roma participants in the study, the Czech participants' attitudes as revealed through the interview hint at the implications this *de facto* segregation has had on how the participants view the position of the county's most significant internal Other.

The interviews hinted at a generational divide. Neither the teachers nor students were asked directly for their opinions about the issue of Roma exclusion in society or in education. It was not considered to be a pertinent issue at all by the teacher group, but the students considered it to be a major source of division in Czech society. Although opinions were still divided on the issue, the fact that it emerged as an important theme among this group, regardless of how they regarded their national identity, implies that there has been some significant shift in the visibility of this issue. What is unclear is whether this is the result of education or experiences outwith school. Further research would be required to ascertain the extent to which changes in education impacted on the visibility of this issue.

Despite their greater awareness of issues of racial division in society, none of the student participants remembered any Roma pupils attending school with them, even when they were aware of a sizeable local Roma population. Continued segregation limits the likely effectiveness of suggested changes to curriculum to support multiculturalism, as it becomes largely theoretical – things like modelling inclusive classrooms is not really possible if classrooms and schools do not reflect the diversity that exists in a society. It also has the potential to further entrench divisions by having minorities spoken for from the perspective of the majority culture (Wang, 2006). That this has occurred in Czech education seems to be supported by the limited, and sometimes marginalising, representations of Others in the textbooks analysed in Chapter 6.

Restricting the access of national minorities to the curriculum, especially through segregation into *speciální školy* that follow a limited curriculum, makes acquiring the necessary academic and social capital for successful participation in society exclusive in favour of the national majority, as it further diminishes opportunities for Others to access these rather esoteric forms of knowledge. This process somewhat echoes the theory of "just enough" education as it applied to Czech peasantry under Habsburg rule (Parízek, 1992) being applied to Roma (and potentially other minority groups) in the present day. This may be a legacy of the communist era's assimilationist approach to minority education in which Roma had no official minority status and their education was largely preparation for manual work (Čaněk, 2001). Overcoming this legacy remains a significant challenge for Czech education,

but it appears now to be a cultural shift that is required, as well as a political one.

8.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study confirm what is already well-known, namely that the transformation from communism to liberal capitalism and democracy presented significant challenges for societies and individuals. In many post-communist states, political and economic transformation was accompanied by increasing expression of nationalistic sentiments and the Czech Republic was no exception (Cakl and Wollman, 2005). This suggests that as the "official" identity of the nation changed, for its individual members a vision of the nation provided a constant thread that could survive the upheaval of regime change. The interviews revealed that this was based on a sense of shared history as much as an ethnocentric view of the nation. Schooling had long been assumed to play a role in the construction of Czech national identity, but there had been little study into how this took place in the period following the collapse of communism to the early twenty-first century. By exploring the extent to which education promoted the idea of a shared history among the majority population, or a civic, heterogenous view of the nation, the findings of the study allow the following tentative recommendations to be made:

1. **As far as possible, pedagogical materials should reflect the diversity that exists in society and represent groups fairly and with awareness of existing cultural biases.**

When selecting textbooks for inclusion into the list of approved textbooks for use in schools, there needs to be an increased awareness of how racial and cultural diversity is represented in the texts. In the textbooks analysed in this study, significant Others were given limited representation, separate from the main narrative of the text. Given that textbooks provide pupils with an image of their possible future roles in society (Weitzman, et al., 1972), improving textbook representation of different social groups must be a priority. As Weninger and Williams (2005) point out, failure to provide positive representations has consequences not only for the marginalised group, but also harms the majority culture as their education fails to provide them with "a

context where positive interaction with images of minority cultures can occur" (p. 174). Failing to provide such a model could feasibly impact on students' expectations of society, and their relations with Others they encounter in life. Attention should also be paid to the meaning conveyed by the juxtaposition of text and image to ensure that they do not inadvertently support the propagation of unhelpful stereotypes, as was sometimes the case in the sample studied in Chapter 6.

As Gellner (1983) points out, there is a tendency for groups to feel wrongs perceived to have been committed against them rather than by them. Textbooks could further address this tendency to skew perspectives on history in favour of the in-group by promoting empathy for minority groups as well as historical representations of the "nations", and by addressing the "darker" periods of Czech history (such as the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans) in relation to national Others in more detail. This would help to challenge unhelpful nationalist feelings based on pervasive victimhood narratives on which some writers, such as Heimann (2009) and Mock (2014), argue that Czech nationalism is based on.

2. **Teacher training and school leadership should facilitate an inclusive school culture that is open to change**

Carefully worded policies can be rather bloodless if there are significant attitudinal barriers to be overcome in their implementation. The existence of such barriers in the context of the Czech Republic has been confirmed not only in this study, but by the Czech Ministry of Education, who recognise the lack of shared values and vision within the system (MŠMT, 2014) and the need to develop these as a priority. If policies are being made in order to comply with laws, they must provide practitioners with clear direction for change. However, this must be met with the resources that practitioners need to carry out change at ground-level, which begins with training that fosters shared inclusive values. It is imperative, too, that existing practitioners are valued stakeholders in this process, so as not to contribute to a perception that inclusive policies are imposed on order to meet Western norms or expectations.

3. Multi-cultural education should go beyond the theoretical and schools and systems should model it in action

Education, and particularly history education, really seems to play a central role in how individuals form an affiliation with the nation. This is not necessarily problematic, but certain features can make it so, for example allowing a "victimhood" narrative to go unchallenged or through excessive nostalgia for a "golden age" in the past (Rieff, 2016; Mock, 2014). The segregation of Roma allows the continuation of the discourse that ethnic Czechs occupy a unique place in contemporary Czech society by allowing them privileged access to the legitimate cultural knowledge necessary for belonging. Diversifying the student body by enforcing a wider policy of inclusion is necessary to avoid "back door discrimination" and tacit acceptance of the *status quo*.

8.4 Recommendations for Future Research

One possibility for further study in this area would be to restrict the study to one school or region and involve an element of participant observation in the data collection. This would allow for consideration of how factors such as local cultures, school policies, and classroom interactions impact on the delivery of national policies. Seeing how individual teachers use the approved textbooks could provide a clearer picture of the mechanisms that reproduce ideas about nationality and belonging. Exclusionary practices could be more specifically identified, and the constraints of local circumstances could be considered. If the study was able to take in "special schools", this might also add to the growing body of evidence that Czech pupils of Romany origin are racially discriminated against in education. Identifying and addressing curricular differences may lay the groundwork for the more substantial systemic change that is required to promote more equality in Czech schools. This would require to be undertaken by a group of researchers and would need to have the support of the local authority to take place.

The impact of geographical mobility on identities, particularly since the Czech Republic joined the EU, would provide an interesting additional perspective and add to the growing body of work on transnational identities among migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, such as Moskal and Sime's

work on Polish migrants in the UK (2015). A stricter sampling method would allow the collection of views from Czechs who had lived abroad and those who had not and conduct a comparative study of their identities and memories of schooling, and how international experience impacts on the interpretation of what was learned in school

Given the critical role that the establishment of Czech-medium schools appears to have played in the establishment of the Czech nation as we understand it today, it would be very interesting to examine the impact of the establishment and increasing popularity of Gaelic-medium schools in Scotland, applying methods similar to those used in this study, i.e. examining the relationship between the policies that promote them, the attitudes of the teachers who work in them, the materials used in them, and the identities of the pupils who have attended them. A comparative element would provide useful insight into the role modern Gaelic-medium schooling has on modern Scottish identity.

8.5 Researcher's Reflections

The idea of applying the methods of this study to a Scottish context seems to bring my thinking on this study full circle. From my initial alarm at rather egregious nation-building impacting on my own professional practice, I became interested in the relationships between what we learn in school and how we see ourselves as adults. When I began studying Czech language and culture, I was at first surprised by how attached Czechs seemed to their national culture and history, and how Czech friends appeared at ease with the idea of sitting at the endpoint of a centuries long struggle for national independence. This seemed odd for a state that had only existed in its current form since 1993. Finding out about the apparently routine and systematic discrimination against the Roma population in the Czech Republic was a pivotal moment in this journey, as it ran contrary to the image of the country I had been presented with up until that point. I wondered if it was possible to establish a secure sense of collective identity that didn't rely on excluding an Other, if people could establish group identities without denigrating, or fearing difference. These questions led me to consider more critically the role that education might play in creating a sense of national identity; for as long as I

can remember, I have believed that education can help shape societies, but I began how wonder about whether this was true, and if so *how?*

Reading for the literature review, I discovered that education was widely regarded as a key player in fostering national identities, and even promoting pernicious forms of exclusive nationalism. Even where nationalism seemed to be civic and inclusive, closer inspection often revealed a dependence on the denigration of a significant Other (Hopkins, 2001), a victimhood narrative (Mock, 2014), or a combination of both, and that these narratives could be perpetuated by school systems. This might be achieved through outright denigration of certain groups, glorification of the "nation", or marginalisation through minimal representation. This led to an unexpected challenge, especially when I was writing up the sections related to the education of Roma pupils in the Czech Republic. In contrast to when I was conducting the empirical research, when I was sometimes shocked by the views or language of the people who I was interviewing, I realised that by writing about this group without providing the opportunity for members of this group to contribute, this study might risk ignoring or misinterpreting the intersectionality of their experience. The research experience provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the position I occupy as an educator, and how my actions might unconsciously contribute to the perpetuation of structures that I consider unjust.

As a result, the project caused me to develop my personal educational philosophy and re-evaluate my beliefs about the purpose of education and the capacity of education to act as a force for change in society. Having spent the last two years living in Prague and working in a private international school in the city, I was able to see first-hand some of the advantages that the provision of private education can bring to a community, despite having always believed that it is a major source of division in society. In my school, I saw that it could also usefully fill a gap for students whose needs could not, at present, be met in the state sector (e.g. those who were staying in the Czech Republic for a year or two due to their parents' work) and whose education would otherwise have been interrupted. However, the fact that this was only accessible to the few who could pay the fees (which could be in excess of twenty thousand euros per annum), or the very few selected for scholarships, cemented my determination that all pupils should have access to an education that meets

their needs regardless of their economic status. This determination, though, is tempered with a sense of pragmatism and what can realistically be achieved in the state sector. In order for real change to take place, a desire to provide all young people - from whatever background - with an education that fosters their personal development and respects their abilities and sensibilities needs to be fostered in all stakeholders.

Appendix 1: Call for Participants in the online newspaper *Britské listy*

Dobrý den,

jsem postgraduální studentka v oboru českých studií na University of Glasgow. Zkoumám, jak vliv má systém českého školství na rozvoj české národní totožnosti. Moje práce doplní dosavadní výzkum o české národní totožnosti (například známou knížku Ladislava Holého) tím, že bude podrobně analyzovat konkrétní zkušenosti českých občanů s českým školstvím.

Pro empirickou část své práce bych ráda provedla pohovory s učiteli, kteří mají pěti nebo víceletou zkušenost vyučování na základních školách v ČR za posledních pětadvacet let. Pohovory by trvaly 30 - 60 minut a uskutečnily by se buď v dubnu 2014 v České republice, anebo online, podle toho, jak si přejete. Ráda bych provedla pohovory aspoň s šesti učiteli, nebo bývalými učiteli.

Školitelem mé výzkumné práce je dr. Jan Čulík a práci schválil Výbor pro etiku College of Arts na University of Glasgow. Všechny pohovory budou anonymní a po dokončení výzkumu nebudeme uchovávat osobní individuální informace.

Pokud byste se chtěli účastnit tohoto výzkumu, prosím napište mi na adresu **k.anderson-mcmullan.1@research.gla.ac.uk**.

Předem vám děkuji za váš čas.

Kirsten Anderson-McMullan MA

Translation

Hello,

I am a postgraduate student in the field of Czech studies at the University of Glasgow. I study how the system of Czech education influences the development of Czech national identity. My work will complement the current research on Czech national identity (such as the well-known book by Ladislav Holý) by analysing the specific experiences of Czech citizens with Czech education in detail.

For the empirical part of my work, I would like to conduct interviews with teachers who have five or more years of teaching experience at elementary schools in the Czech Republic for the last twenty-five years. The interviews would take 30 to 60 minutes and they would take place in April 2014 in the Czech Republic or online as you wish. I would like to make interviews with at least six teachers or former teachers.

The supervisor of my research is Dr. Jan Čulík and this work has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the College of Arts at the University of Glasgow. All interviews will be anonymous, and we will not keep personal information when the research is completed.

If you would like to participate in this research, please email me at k.anderson-mcmullan.1@research.gla.ac.uk.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Kirsten Anderson

Appendix 2: Informal call for student participants

Ahoj Češi!

Poprosím vás o pomoc :) Kdybyste to nevěděli, v současnosti dělám nějaký výzkum. Zajímám se o to, jaký má vliv celostátní systém vzdělávání na národní identitu v ČR. Chtěla bych udělat tolik rozhovorů s Čechy (18 az 33 let), kolik je možné. Rozhovory by mohly probíhat přes Skype, v Glasgow, nebo v ČR v dubnu. Rozhovory můžou probíhat v češtině nebo angličtině, nebo ve směsi známých jazyků! Hovořit budeme o vaší zkušenosti na základní škole, co si myslíte o ČR a Češích a o vaší identitě.

Když máte zájem, napište mi jméno, emailovou adresu a jméno na Skypu, a pak bych poslala oficiální věci.

Předem moc díky!

Kirsten

Translation

Hello Czechs!

I'm asking for help :) In case you don't already know, I'm currently doing some research. I am interested in the influence of the national education system on the national identity in the Czech Republic. I would like to interview as many Czechs as possible (18 to 33 years). Interviews could take place via Skype, in Glasgow, or in the Czech Republic in April. Interviews can be held in Czech or English or in a mix of known languages! We will talk about your experience at primary school, what you think about the Czech Republic and Czechs, and about your own identity.

If you are interested, please give me your name, e-mail address and Skype name, and then I'll send you official papers.

Thank you in advance!

Kirsten

Appendix 3: Consent form

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow, College of Arts Research Ethics Committee

I understand that Kirsten Anderson is collecting data in the form of digitally recorded interviews for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

Information for participants

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the state school system in the Czech Republic aims to form a sense of national identity in citizens. It will also examine how peoples' experiences of the Czech education system have impacted on their perceptions of themselves as Czech citizens.

You have been chosen to take part in this study because you have been taught in, or worked in, a state-run elementary school in the Czech Republic since its foundation in 1992.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

The research will involve an interview, which will last between 20 minutes and half an hour. It will take place at a time and location convenient for you, during (January 2014).

The research is undertaken as part of a course offered by the University of Glasgow, and the results of this study will be used to inform the researcher's PhD dissertation.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- I have read the “Information for Participants” section above and agree to the data I provide being used for the purposes described therein.
- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor:_____ Date: ____/____/_____

Researcher’s name and email contact:

Kirsten Anderson
k.anderson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisor’s name and email contact:

Jan Čulík
Jan.Culik@glasgow.ac.uk

Department address:

Hetherington Building, Bute Gardens, Glasgow, G12 8RS, Scotland

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for Student interviews

1. Kolik je Vám let?
2. V kterém městě jste chodil/a do základní školy?
3. Jak byste popsal/la Vaši národní identitu?
4. Jak byste popsal/a Vaši etnickou identitu?
5. Jak důležité je, osobně pro Vás, být Čech/Češka?
6. Jste hrdý/hrdá občan/občanka České republiky? Proč?
7. Stydíte se kvůli něčemu za Českou republiku? Proč?
8. Má podle Vašeho názoru ČR nějaký společný národni cíl nebo smysl?
9. Co myslíte, že sjednocuje a rozděluje občany České republiky?
10. Jakou roli má podle Vás historie při rozvoji vývoje národní totožnosti?
11. Které jazyky jste studoval/a na zakládní škole?
12. Měl/a jste výběr?
13. Proč jste si vybral/a konkretní jazyk/jazyky?
14. Pamatujete si, co jste se učil/a o dějinách v základní škole?
15. Jaké byly podle vás nejdůležitejší historické události, které si pamatujete z hodin dějepisu? O kterých cizích zemích jste se učil/a v škole?
16. Jaké věci jste se učil/a?
17. Učil/a jste se ve škole o nějaké sporné věci? Uvěd'te přiklady.
18. Měli jste ve škole občanskou nauku? (Jestliže ano, prosím popište ji)
19. Co jste se učil/a o České republice na základní škole?
20. Co jste se učil/a na základní škole o svém kraji?
21. Jaké jsou podle Vašeho názoru největší současné společenské problémy České republiky?
22. Jaké jsou podle Vašého názoru největší současné politické problémy České republiky?
23. Jaké jsou současně největší hospodářské problémy České republiky?
24. Cítíte, že Vaše školní vzdělávání Vás dobře připravilo na život a na výzvy moderní české společnosti? Proč? Nebo proč ne?

Translation

1. How old are you?

2. In which city did you attend primary school?

3. How would you describe your national identity?

4. How would you describe your ethnic identity?

5. How important is it, personally for you, to be Czech / Czech?

6. Are you a proud citizen of the Czech Republic? Why?

7. Are you ashamed about any aspects Czech Republic? Why?

8. In your opinion, does the Czech Republic have a common national goal or meaning?

9. What do you think unites and divides citizens of the Czech Republic?

10. What role do you think history has in the development of national identity?

11. Which languages did you study at the primary school?

12. Did you have a selection?

13. Why did you choose that language / those languages?

14. Do you remember what you learned about history in primary school?

15. What do you think are the most important historical events that you remember from the history lessons? Which foreign countries did you learn about at school?

16. What things did you learn?

17. Did you learn at school about any controversial topics? Report examples.

18. Did you have any citizenship education at school? (If yes please describe it)

19. What did you learn about the Czech Republic at primary school?

20. What did you learn at elementary school about your local area?

21. What are, in your opinion, the biggest social problems of the Czech Republic?

22. What do you think are the biggest political problems in the Czech Republic today?

23. What are the biggest economic problems in the Czech Republic?

24. Do you feel that your school education has prepared you well for the life in, and challenges of modern Czech society? Why or why not?

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for teacher interviews

1. Kde pracujete?
2. Jak dlouho jste zaměstnaný/á v systému školství v České republice/Československu a jaká je/byla Vaše pozice?
3. Jak byste popsal/a Vaši národni identitu?
4. Jak byste popsal/a Vaši etnickou identitu?
5. Jak důležité je, osobně pro Vás, být Čech/Češka?
6. Jste hrdý/hrdá občan/občanka České republiky? Proč?
7. Stydíte se kvůli něčemu za Českou Republiku? Proč?
8. Má podle Vašeho názoru ČR nějaký společný národni cíl nebo smysl?
9. Co myslíte, že sjednocuje a rozděluje občany České republiky?
10. Jakou roli má podle Vás historie ve vývoji národni totožnosti?
11. Jakých změn jste byl/a svědkem v systému školství České republiky od roku 1989? Které z nich podle Vašeho názoru jsou nejdůležitější a proč?
12. Ovlivnily změny vzdělávacího systému nějak Vaši práci? Jak?
13. Co myslíte, že jsou klíčové faktory ovlivňující změnu školského systému České republiky?
14. Jaké jsou podle Vašeho názoru největší úspěchy českého školského systému od roku 1989?
15. Jak myslíte, že jsou změny politiky a přístupu účinné ve školách?
16. Jaké myslíte, že jsou největší výzvy současného českého školství?
17. Jak dobře připravuje český školský systém žáky na život po škole?
18. Je v českém školském systému něco ojediněle úspěšné nebo naopak neúspěšné?

Translation

1. Where do you work?

2. For how long have you been employed in the Czech education system and in what position(s)?

3. How would you describe your national identity?

4. How would you describe your ethnic identity?

5. How important is it, personally for you, to be Czech?

6. Are you a proud citizen of the Czech Republic? Why?

7. Are you ashamed about any aspects of the Czech Republic? Why?

8. In your opinion, does the Czech Republic have a common national goal or meaning?

9. What do you think unites and divides citizens of the Czech Republic?

10. What role do you think history has in the development of national identity?

11. What changes have you witnessed in the Czech Republic's education system since 1989? Which, in your opinion, are the most important and why?

12. Have the changes in the education system influenced your work? If so, how?

13. What do you think are the key factors influencing changes in the Czech Republic's education system?

14. What do you think are the greatest achievements of the Czech education system since 1989?

15. How do you think policy and approach changes are effective in schools?

16. What do you think are the biggest challenges of contemporary Czech education?

17. How well does the Czech school system prepare pupils for life after school?

18. What are the successes and/or failures of the Czech school system?

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